



## Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

This policy outlines the Group's approach to Equality, Diversity & Inclusion for both the College of North West London and City of Westminster College.

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Author	Diana Brown
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# Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

## Introduction

UCG is fully committed to promoting, maintaining, and supporting equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of its work. UCG aims to create an environment where all individuals have the opportunity to achieve their full potential and respect from all. UCG expresses its opposition to all forms of inequality and discrimination in line with the public Sector Equality Duty 2011 and as defined by the Equality Act 2010. This Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy is the principal policy for equality, diversity and inclusion for UCG. The group abides by the current equality legislation and ensures that all subsequent legislative changes are fully utilised to update this policy accordingly to ensure that its practices are lawful. Compliance with this policy also ensures that no member of the college commits unlawful acts of discrimination.

## Definitions

- **Equality** – the state of being equal, especially in status, rights, or opportunities. E.g. "an organisation aiming to advance racial equality"
- **Diversity** – a range of different groups in accordance with the nine protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010.
- **Inclusion** - the action or state of including or of being included within a group or structure.

## **Background**

### 1.1 The Equality Act 2010:

The Equality Act 2010 became law on 1st October 2010. The Act introduced common definitions of discrimination. The nine 'protected characteristics' under the Act are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Race
- Gender reassignment (people undergoing gender reassignment or who are trans-gender)
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation (gay, lesbian, bisexual and heterosexual orientation)

In addition to the nine protected characteristics above, UCG extends this policy to include the protection of staff and students from discrimination or harassment on the grounds of:

- Nationality
- Political status under UK law (refugee status, EU settled status, etc)

Students and staff must be protected from discrimination and harassment on these grounds. The Act also protects against discrimination by association and perception, e.g. a partner or carer of someone with a protected characteristic should also be protected from discrimination and harassment.

## 2 Public Sector Equality Duty

2.1 The Public sector Equality Duty is set out in section 149 of the Act and came into force on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2011.

2.2 The Equality Duty has **three aims**. It requires public bodies to have ***due regard*** for 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.

2.3 UCG must have *due regard* to these duties in the carrying out of its functions. Having *due regard* means consciously thinking about the three aims of the general duty as part of the process of decision-making.

For example, having due regard to the need to ***advance equality of opportunity*** involves considering the need to:

- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- meet the needs of people with protected characteristics; and
- encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is low.

***Fostering good relations*** involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people who share a protected characteristic and others

## 3 Specific duties

- 3.1 The Public Sector specific duty requires all public bodies to publish information to demonstrate the extent to which it furthered the aims of the general equality duty. Subsequent information must be published at least annually.
- 3.2 The regulations require public bodies to:
- Publish equality objectives every four years
  - Publish information annually to demonstrate their compliance with the general Equality Duty;
  - Publish information relating to their employees (for bodies with 150 or more staff) and others affected by their policies and practices (such as service users, e.g. students).
- 3.3 All information must be published in a way that is accessible to the public.
- 3.3.1 UCG will uphold its public sector duty as outlined above and actively seek to ensure that both students and staff experience equality of opportunity and are free from harassment, discrimination, or victimisation of any kind, regarding the protected characteristics. Furthermore, UCG recognises and extends this policy to include, social status and deprivation, homelessness, unemployment, asylum and refugee status or membership of a trade union, or for any other identifiable cause protected by law.
- 3.3.2 As a responsible body, UCG recognises and accepts its vicarious liability for the actions of staff, students and sub-contractors. UCG will comply with all legislation, regulations, statutory and non-statutory codes of practice and our contractual requirements relating to equality and diversity.
- 3.3.3 UCG will challenge all forms of inequality, discrimination and harassment, and actively promote opportunities for the groups mentioned in 1.1 and foster good relations between them. This work is regarded as the responsibility of all staff in UCG. All employees share a responsibility to challenge a student, visitor or colleague who behaves in a discriminatory way and encourage them to exhibit more appropriate attitudes or behaviour. We will ensure that staff and students understand what behaviour is expected of them. We will be clear that reports of this behaviour will be taken extremely seriously and will not be tolerated.
- 3.3.4 Any action which contravenes this policy renders individuals employed by UCG or students liable for disciplinary action. Evidence of discrimination or harassment may be considered as gross misconduct. Clients or contractors who contravene the policy can expect appropriate action.

#### **4. Scope**

- 4.1 The Corporation of UCG has an ultimate role in approving, championing, promoting and monitoring the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy.
- 4.2 The following groups and post-holders have responsibilities for the development and implementation of policies relating to equality and diversity for staff and students.
- 4.2.1 The Group Principal and CEO are responsible for managing UCG's committees and boards to ensure compliance with legislation. A link governor for Equality, Diversity & Inclusion is responsible for:
- supporting the College to have regard for the objectives of the equalities act and that equalities is ingrained in its ethos.
  - keeping abreast of local and national issues affecting equality, diversity & inclusion and keeping the Corporation informed of these.
  - ensuring that the group's priorities for equality and diversity are considered during Corporation discussions.
- 4.2.2 The Senior Leadership Team are responsible for ensuring that the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy is implemented in all aspects of its work.
- 4.2.3 Assistant Principal for Student Support Services has strategic responsibility for equality, diversity & inclusion for students at UCG. Other designated officers include the Safeguarding Leads and Head of Learner Services, Deputy Head of Student Services. The postholders will be responsible for raising awareness of equality and diversity procedures and practices among the student body across the group.
- 4.2.4 College Managers (Head of Faculty/Service, Curriculum Leaders) are responsible for implementing the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy in relation to staff and students in their curriculum /service area.
- 4.2.5 The Director of People & Communication is the designated senior officer with responsibility for equality and diversity for staff at UCG. The HR Department is responsible for formulating, monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy in respect of staff and for raising awareness of equality and diversity procedures and practices among the staff.
- 4.2.6 The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Lead will have responsibility for coordinating and ensuring the implementation of EDI action plan. Student/Learner Services are responsible for formulating, monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy in respect of students. The policy will be reviewed on a termly basis by the Student Council and it will be a standing item on the Student Council meeting

agenda. There will also be student representatives across the group who will have responsibility for Equality, Diversity & Inclusion on the Student Council. They will also attend the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Steering Group meetings. As a minimum, the college will monitor the ethnic, gender and age composition of the existing workforce, student population and of applicants for jobs, and the number of people with disabilities within these groups. The college will consider and take any appropriate action to address any issues that may be identified as a result of the monitoring process.

- 4.2.7 The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Steering Group have responsibility for monitoring equality and diversity practices across all campuses. They will provide guidance to staff and students on equality and diversity matters and to complete regular reviews and update of their EDI activities.
- 4.2.8 Every staff member has an implied duty under their contract of employment to comply with the requirements of this policy.

Staff should 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 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 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 learner
- awareness of the basic concepts of equality and diversity

- 4.2.9 Every student has an implied duty under the respective Student Code of Conduct to comply with the requirements of this policy. Students should have:
- high expectations of the College to tackle discrimination and promote equality and diversity
  - treat all staff, students and visitors with respect at all times
  - abide by the Single Equality Scheme at all times
  - report incidents of harassment, victimisation or discrimination to a member of College staff
- 4.2.10 Any individuals or organisations contracted within UCG have an implied duty under their contract of employment to comply with the requirements of this policy.
- 4.2.11 Any students and staff working on placement outside UCG will be asked to understand the policy requirements of that organisation, whilst ensuring they comply with the policy of UCG.
- 4.2.12 UCG will check that organisations who have students and staff on extended work placement at their premises seek to comply with UCG Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy.

## **5 Intent**

- 5.1 Through its recruitment, selection and admission procedures, UCG will actively seek to ensure that it supports equality and diversity in all aspects of education and employment, so that the student body, workforce and Corporation reflect the diversity of the communities we serve. The recruitment, selection and admission procedure will be available on the College's intranet under Human Resources.
- 5.2 UCG will actively seek to achieve equality for all students and to engage all learners, irrespective of their cultural background in all aspects of teaching, learning and support. It is committed to the attempt to 'narrow the gap' where students from one diversity strand achieve less well than those from other strands.
- 5.3 UCG is committed to actively achieving equality for all staff in training, career development, promotion and reward, and will support staff to help them maximise opportunities to promote equality and diversity. We will identify meaningful mentoring opportunities for staff with the protected characteristic.
- 5.4 UCG strives to identify, prevent and redress unfair discrimination against any group, in particular those who may be disadvantaged. The group seeks to create a community in which everyone, without exception, is respected and valued. Striving to ensure that the environment is free from harassment and bullying and that everyone is treated with dignity and

respect is an important aspect of ensuring equal opportunities. Our main aim is to prevent such discrimination from occurring again in future.

- 5.5 Teaching materials and methods, and all forms of general communication with students will be sensitive to different cultures and will seek to promote Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and foster good relations between people from different groups.
- 5.6 UCG will actively support where possible efforts to rehabilitate ex-offenders. However, UCG reserves the right to refuse such applications where it is concluded that admitting the individual concerned poses a danger to other students or staff or an unacceptable level of corporate risk. Applications to College courses from ex-offenders will be considered via a review panel making recommendations to the Assistant Principal for Student Support Services.
- 5.7 Opportunities will be sought to extend the influence of UCG's Equality and Diversity good practice to parents, Higher Education institutions and other partner organisations, employers with whom we work, the local community, and the FE sector generally.

## **6 Implementation**

- 6.1 Implementing equal opportunities is an ongoing process that will be regularly reviewed by UCG's Senior Leadership Team and the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Steering Group. All staff will be given the opportunity to become members of the Steering Group at the start of each academic year. The membership of the group will be published on the staff intranet.
- 6.2 All staff will be made aware of the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy during the induction process. All staff are required to complete EDI as part of their induction. Additional training will also be conducted for staff during whole College training days.
- 6.3 UCG will produce an annual Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan to support the development and provision of equality and diversity. The action plan will be monitored by the Equality, Diversity Inclusion steering Group.
- 6.4 The Senior Leadership Team, Equality & Diversity & Inclusion Steering group & The Student Council will review all policies and procedures to ensure that a commitment to equality and diversity is continually evident. Equality Impact Assessments will be conducted on key strategic documents and projects and policies related to students and human resources at the time of their revision. Any actions resulting from impact assessments will be included in the policy where relevant. The equality impact assessment



includes all the protected characteristics. It is a mandatory requirement for all staff, visitors and contractors.

- 6.5 College marketing and support materials will actively encourage applications and enquiries from all areas of the community, reflecting the ethos of this Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy. Core prospectus information will be provided in alternative formats on request.
- 6.6 UCG aims to provide support services during enrolment and on programme to help in the identification of additional student support needs where necessary.
- 6.7 Ongoing and meaningful EDI training, advice, guidance and support will be provided to ensure that all staff, students understand their duties and obligations in law.
- 6.8 UCG will protect the confidentiality of disclosure of sensitive matters related to equality and diversity. If information needs to be shared, for example on the grounds of health and safety or criminal law, care will be taken to share only what is necessary and to record what was shared, with whom, and why.
- 6.9 UCG will be inclusive to all religions but will neither promote, nor permit the promotion of any one religious faith or culture. All individuals will be expected to adhere to College policies, rules and regulations, regardless of their personal faith or religion. Whilst UCG resources exist primarily for the delivery of learning activities; arrangements will be made, where this is practicable, for staff or students to carry out essential religious observance. Dedicated facilities cannot be provided for particular faith groups. It will be at the discretion of UCG whether lettings arrangements can be entered into with external faith-based organisations. Arrangements will not be entered into where such an organisation seeks to promote others to its cause and where the event or activity is barred to those of different faiths or no faith.
- 6.10 Staff who believe they have not been treated in accordance with the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy may wish to make a complaint. This may be made either informally or formally in accordance with the UCG complaints policies.
- 6.11 UCG will consider it to be a disciplinary offence under this Policy if any employee makes a false accusation against another employee regarding an alleged breach of the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy. All alleged breaches will be reported to the Director of People & Communication &/or the Assistant Principal for Student Support Services
- 6.12 Students who believe they have not been treated in accordance with the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy may wish to make a complaint. This

may be either informally or formally in accordance with UCG's Complaints Policy.

## **7 Monitoring**

7.1 UCG will conduct comprehensive and effective monitoring of all aspects of the Policy, both on an ongoing basis and as education and employment policies and practices change.

- UCG will regularly benchmark ourselves against other organisations both in and outside of the FE sector to gauge the impact of our EDI improvement actions and learn from best practice elsewhere.
- Benchmarking data will be sought for monitoring gender, ethnicity, age and disability.

7.2 The Senior Leadership Team will receive data which will inform the planning process and the implementation of this Policy. In line with the Equality Act 2010, we are required to collect, monitor and report (generally) on protected characteristics. This ensures that we advance the equality of opportunity between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not. This also helps us to assess our progress of raising awareness and eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

7.3 Monitoring will be undertaken in accordance with best practice recommendations, particularly from the following bodies:

OFSTED; the Association of Colleges; and  
The Equality and Human Rights Commission

7.4 UCG will monitor the implementation of this Policy as part of annual training activities, through staff and student focus groups and staff exit interviews.

7.4.1 An annual quality assurance audit for equality, diversity & inclusion will be completed by Assistant Principal for Student Support Services and supported by the designated officers with responsibility for equality and diversity for students at UCG.

7.4.2 The audit will review the respective College's practices for equality and diversity provision, including the effectiveness of the respective College's policies and procedures, response to new legislation, successful resolution of any complaints or grievances in relation to equality and diversity, the effectiveness of staff training, provision of support and services for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities and health and safety aspects of equality and diversity.

7.5 An annual report on equality and diversity matters will be prepared and submitted to the Corporation.

## **8 Promotion of Equality, Diversity & Inclusion**

8.1 UCG will promote its equality and diversity policies and practices to staff through training, development and the induction programme for new staff.

8.2 All students will receive a briefing on equality and diversity during induction. Additional guidance will be available through UCG's tutorial programme.

8.3 Copies of this policy will be made available on all College websites and intranets.

8.4 Information on students and staff at UCG will be made available on all college websites and intranets under policies in line with the Public Sector Specific duties deriving from the Equality Act 2010.

8.5 UCG will set, publish (on its websites under policies) and evaluate equality objectives in line with the Public Sector Specific duties.

8.6 All College Policies will be required to promote and make appropriate reference to equality and diversity matters where appropriate.

## **9 Review**

9.1 This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis in accordance with legislative and educational developments.