



## Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

Document Status	
Author:	Claire Collins
Version:	1
Date:	02/06/2022
Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Form	Completed
Approved by:	Corporation
Date of Approval:	22/06/2022
Date of Policy/EIA Review:	June 2025

UCG is fully committed to promoting, maintaining and supporting equality and diversity in all aspects of its work. UCG aims to create an environment where all individuals have the opportunity to achieve their full potential and gain a feeling of self-esteem and respect for and from all others. UCG expresses its opposition to all forms of inequality and discrimination and is committed to ensuring that its recruitment practices proactively address imbalances in the diversity profile of the workforce at all levels. This Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy is the principal policy for equality, diversity and social inclusion for UCG.

## 1 Background

### 1.1 The Equality Act 2010:

The Equality Act 2010 became law on 1st October 2010. The Act introduces 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
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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** 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.

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.
- 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 CEO and Group Principal and the Strategic Leadership Team 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 Strategic Leadership Team is responsible for ensuring that the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy is implemented in all aspects of its work.
  - 4.2.3 The Deputy Principal 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 post holders 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 (Assistant Principals and Curriculum Managers) 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.
  - 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.
- 4.2.9 Every student has an implied duty under the respective Student Code of Conduct to comply with the requirements of this policy.
- 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 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.
- 5.2 UCG will 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 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.
- 5.4 Any form of unfair discrimination against students or staff will be tackled effectively and with the aim of preventing such discrimination from occurring again in future.
- 5.5 Teaching materials and methods, and all forms of general communication with students will strive to be sensitive to different cultures and will seek to promote Equality and Diversity and foster good relations between people from different groups.
- 5.6 UCG will 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 CEO.

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 Strategic Leadership Team and the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Steering Group

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 Strategic Leadership Team will review all policies and procedures to ensure that a commitment to equality and diversity is continually evident. Equality Impact Assessments may be conducted on key strategic documents and projects and policies related to students and human resources at the time of their revision.

6.5 College marketing and support materials will seek to 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 EDI training, advice and 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 Human Resources Policies and Procedures.
- 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.
- 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 Strategic Leadership Team will receive data which will inform the planning process and the implementation of this Policy.
- 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, in line with the Public Sector Specific duties deriving from the Equality Act 2010.

8.5 UCG will set, publish (on its websites) 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.