



# **Single Equality Scheme**

**Approved by SMT (P) - 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2011**

## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1** The Board of the Corporation, College Management and recognised trade unions at Hugh Baird College are fully committed to delivering equality of opportunity for all its students and staff, to eliminate all forms of illegal discrimination as well as all forms of harassment and victimisation.
- 1.2** This Single Equality Scheme incorporates all of the previous work and incorporates the College policies and procedures in respect of the protected characteristics.
- 1.3** The scheme provides guidance on how the College will meet its equality duty; how policies, procedures and plans will be monitored for adverse impact; how the overall practice and outcomes of the College will be monitored and how action will be planned and delivered to address any concerns that are identified.

## **2 Meeting the equality duties**

- 2.1** This scheme is designed to ensure that the College meets its legal duties in relation to the following protected characteristics:
  - race;
  - gender (and Transgender identity), gender re-assignment/being a transsexual person;
  - disability;
  - religion or belief;
  - age;
  - sex;
  - sexuality, sexual orientation (lesbian, gay, bisexual or heterosexual);
  - pregnancy and maternity.
- 2.2** This scheme will operate within the framework of Equality and Diversity legislation as outlined in The Equality Act 2010. The Act will replace nine existing pieces of legislation thus bringing all existing legislation into one single Act.
- 2.3** In practice this means:
  - Meeting the common duties in relation to students, staff and members of the public from all of the above categories as follows: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the act;
  - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a a protected characteristic and those who do not;

- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

**2.4** The Equality Act 2010 expressly prohibits further and higher education institutions from discriminating against, harassing or victimising:

- prospective students (in relation to admissions arrangements);
- students at the institution (including those absent or temporarily excluded);
- in some limited circumstances former students.

### **3 Discrimination and harassment**

#### **3.1 Application**

**3.1.1** Discrimination and harassment can be considered as any hostile or offensive act or expression including persistent and unwelcome comments, looks, jokes, suggestions or physical contact. It can be based on a person's race, gender, gender identity, disability, age, religion or sexuality or assumptions about any of these things and has the effect of threatening a person's job security or create a stressful or intimidating working environment.

**3.1.2** Harassment of staff or students on grounds of race, sexuality, disability, age, religion and gender may include:

- physical abuse and making threats against a person;
- insults, derogatory name-calling and offensive jokes;
- offensive comments in the course of class discussions;
- offensive graffiti or written insults;
- offensive emails or text messages;
- provocative behaviour such as wearing offensive badges or insignia;
- bringing offensive materials such as leaflets or magazines into College;
- any of the above behaviour based on assumptions about a person's identity.

**3.1.3** Any member of staff or student, whatever their background may experience harassment. However, it can often be difficult for people to make complaints about harassment and management must take care to ensure that such complaints are not ridiculed or trivialised.

**3.1.4** Harassment is not a trivial matter and can lead to emotional stress and physical illness and College Managers must ensure that the College fulfils its legal obligations not to tolerate

discrimination and to take the health and safety of its staff seriously.

**3.1.5** It is essential that all such incidents are dealt with effectively. An understanding of the cause or motive for the behaviour might inform how that action is dealt with and judgements will have to be made as to the seriousness of the incident. Nevertheless such behaviour must not be ignored.

**3.1.6** Overt harassment and discrimination, deliberate in intent, and obvious in its expression is relatively easy to identify. However, there may be many situations where it will be very difficult to distinguish between incidents which are accidental, thoughtless, or the product of familiarity. The individual may feel that he or she will not be taken seriously or will be blamed or that people will not understand, there may be no other witnesses to incidents of this form of harassment, there may also be a time lapse between any incidents and the complaint.

**3.1.7** Where students are involved, knowledge of those students and the precise context of the situation will have a major bearing on whether the relevant procedures are invoked, and with what intentions. However, in all cases, the response should be to educate and inform, even if it is clear that no further action is necessary.

#### **4 Profile of the College, its students and staff**

**4.1** Hugh Baird College serves the local communities of South Sefton and North Liverpool. The College operates mainly from its campus located in Bootle. The College seeks to ensure that both the student population and the College workforce is representative of the communities the College serves.

**4.2** The College monitors both its workforce and its student population against the following categories:

- Race
- Gender
- Disability
- Age

**4.3** At the moment the College does not monitor on the basis of religion and sexual orientation but all monitoring arrangements are kept under review.

**4.4** The College will collect and analyse the following activities against each of these categories:

#### 4.4.1 For learners

- Applications, and success and failure rates for admissions to programmes
- Retention rates
- Achievement rates
- Disciplinary action
- Complaints by learners or their sponsors/employers
- Consultative meetings
- Satisfaction surveys

#### 4.4.2 For employees

- Grade and category of work
- Job application rates
- Selection success rates
- Types of contract (permanent, temporary, full time, fractional)
- Training and staff development application rates
- Promotion application and success rates
- Disciplinary, grievance and capability proceedings
- Consultative meetings
- Satisfaction surveys

## 5 **Values and Principles**

### 5.1 **Commitment**

5.1.2 Hugh Baird College affirms that all individuals are entitled to the same equal rights and opportunities and have the same responsibilities regardless of their race, gender, disability, sexuality, religion or age.

5.1.2 The College will seek to identify and eliminate discrimination, harassment or any form of illegal treatment based on any of the above criteria.

5.1.3 The College will respect and seek to fully utilise the diverse skills talents and experiences of all its workforce and students. To this end the College will actively engage with students and staff in the development of this equality scheme.

5.1.4 These commitments are reflected in the College's mission, which is "To improve life, job and business prospects through excellent education, training and support".

### 5.2 **Putting the commitment into practice**

This scheme aims to be comprehensive in the following ways:

- 5.2.1** Hugh Baird College will further develop procedures and practices that encourage a diverse student population and staff group to fully participate in the life of the College and where different backgrounds and experiences are utilised for the benefit of all. All policies, procedures and plans will be subject to a generic impact assessment to assess the impact (positive and negative) of these initiatives and where appropriate modifications are suggested they will be implemented. The impact assessment template is shown in **Appendix 1**.
- 5.2.2** Hugh Baird College will further develop procedures and working practices to tackle discrimination and harassment, recognising the fact that individuals may suffer or may have suffered from various forms of disadvantage. The College will work to continuously ensure the environment for students and staff is harmonious and safe.
- 5.2.3** The elements of this scheme will be developed in consultation with staff, students and external stakeholders to ensure that they continue to respond to the concerns of all the people affected.
- 5.2.4** The principles of equality and diversity will be applied consistently across all aspects of learning and service delivery, working practices and the environment including admissions, student services, learning support, curriculum development, teaching, work experience, learning and marketing.
- 5.2.5** As an employer, the College will ensure that the principles of equality and diversity will be applied to recruitment, redeployment, staff development and promotion, to ensure that all individuals are encouraged to achieve their full potential. Staff development and training on aspects of equality and diversity will continue to be arranged for all members of staff at induction together with refresher training thereafter.

## **6 Procedures for reporting any alleged breaches of Equality and Diversity**

In the event of any alleged breaches on any of the grounds of equality and diversity covered by this scheme, the following reporting procedures must be followed:

- i. If a student has a complaint regarding the behaviour of another student, the student must report the matter to their Personal Tutor who will discuss with their Senior Tutor. If necessary, appropriate action will be taken, using normal College procedures.
- ii. If the complaint is raised by a student and relates to the behaviour of a member of staff, the student must use the Student Complaint procedure.
- iii. If the complaint is raised by a member of staff and relates to the behaviour of a student, the staff member must report the matter to their

- line manager in writing. If necessary, appropriate action will be taken, using normal College procedures.
- iv. If the complaint is raised by a member of staff and relates to the behaviour of another member of staff, the staff member must use the Staff Grievance procedure.

## **7 Publicising the scheme and reporting progress**

### **7.1 To the public (including learners, staff, partners and other stakeholders)**

- The College's commitment to equality across all strands will be highlighted in our prospectus and in our strategic plan
- Summary of the results of monitoring information will be presented to meetings of the Equality and Diversity Committee, QA (HR) and the Governing Body

### **7.2 To learners**

- All learners will receive a summary of the scheme. Copies of the scheme will be available on the College Intranet
- The induction programme for learners will highlight the College's commitment to equality and diversity and what action they can take if they believe they have encountered discrimination and how the College would handle such matters
- Tutors will reinforce this information during tutorials or work based mentoring

### **7.3 To work placement providers, partners, contractors, associated employers and other stakeholders**

- All work placement providers, partners and franchises will receive a summary of their responsibilities under the policy and will be required to signify their understanding and agreement to them
- Work placement providers will be offered briefings on equality and diversity issues
- College staff will promote the recruitment of students from under represented groups to providers and Employers

### **7.4 To staff**

- All staff will have access to a full copy of this scheme via SharePoint with an introduction in the staff newsletter
- The induction programme for new staff clearly states the College's Commitment to equality and diversity
- A summary of the results of our monitoring will be published annually on the staff intranet
- new starters receive a summary of the Single Equality Scheme in their information pack

## **8 Ensuring compliance**

The College will ensure that:

- 8.1** A member of the Senior Management Team (Director of Participation) will have delegated responsibility from the Principal for the operation of the College's Single Equality Scheme in relation to the student body. The Director will chair the Equality and Diversity Committee, comprising teaching staff, business support staff, academic and business managers, and senior manager responsible for Estates and Resources.
- 8.2** The Deputy Principal will have delegated responsibility from the Principal for the operation of the College's Single Equality Scheme in relation to the staff body. The Deputy Principal will chair the QA (HR) group, comprising teaching staff, academic managers, senior managers and the Personnel Manager.
- 8.3** Governors, staff, learners, partners and all stakeholders (including work placements providers) are aware of our Single Equality Scheme and the action needed for its implementation.
- 8.4** Staff, learners, partners and all stakeholders are aware of the value placed on equality of opportunity and diversity and that action will be taken in the event of any breach of these policies.
- 8.5** Governors and staff have access to comprehensive information and progress reports that will assist them to plan, implement and monitor actions to carry out their responsibilities under the scheme.
- 8.6** The college publicity materials present appropriate and positive images that support these provisions.
- 8.7** Schemes of work, lesson content and teaching resources demonstrate sensitivity to issues of diversity.
- 8.8** Care is taken to ensure that disabled learners and learners from under represented groups or from groups who have traditionally experienced discrimination have access to appropriate support and facilities.
- 8.9** Applications for employment are drawn from a wide pool with positive action to encourage applications from under-represented groups.
- 8.10** Recruitment, selection and promotion procedures are designed to enable people from under represented and disadvantaged groups to fully participate in the process.
- 8.11** Staff development schemes are designed to raise awareness and effectively meet the learning needs of all staff including disadvantaged and under-represented groups.

- 8.12** Action is taken to ensure that individuals will be treated equally and that decisions on pay, training, career management and termination of employment are based solely on objective, job related criteria.
- 8.13** The Principal and the Chair of the Corporation have overall responsibility for the operation of this scheme and associated policies that shall be reviewed regularly, particularly when there are any future changes in legislation.

**Cathy Fairclough**  
**Director of Participation**

## **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

### **What is it?**

An Equality Impact Assessment is simply a process that enables us to check out how an existing function or policy or a new function or policy affects groups of people covered by equalities legislation and our Equality and Diversity strategy. It allows us to look at evidence or consult as to whether the function or policy is discriminating (actual or perceived to be) against a particular group of people. We can then change the function or policy if it is having an adverse effect on some groups.

### **Mapping functions and policies**

Clearly, some functions and policies have a greater impact on specific groups than others for example; a student car parking policy is likely to have a greater impact on a student with a mobility disability than those without a disability.

The first stage is to conduct a mapping exercise of all functions and policies to determine their relevance to gender, race and disability equality. The aim of the preliminary mapping is to determine whether the particular function or policy is of High, Medium or Low relevance.

Wherever possible learners need to be involved in determining priorities in terms of impact assessments for example, through the current Learners' with Disabilities forum.

For each policy/function the following information needs to be gathered:

- What is the purpose of the policy/function
- Who are the people affected by the policy/function
- Is there any evidence that specific groups have different needs in relation to the policy/function? Think about barriers which may exist.
- Does this policy/function contribute to or hinder equality?

### **Assessing individual policies and functions**

- Determine level of relevance to equality strand
- Check existing evidence/data
- Assess impact
- Find ways of mitigating any adverse impact
- Consult appropriately on the final policy/function

### **Reporting and Publishing Findings**

It is a legal duty to report annually on the progress of all three equality strands. This will take the form of a brief report published to the College Website and thus accessible to members of the public and all stakeholders.

