

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

2016-2018



Date reviewed: December 2015
Date for next Review: December 2018
Policy Owner: Deputy Principal

1. Introduction

Farnborough College of Technology is committed to meeting the general and specific duties contained in The Equality Act 2010. We believe that all students and members of staff should have the opportunity to fulfil their potential whatever their background, identity and circumstance. We are committed to creating a community that recognises and celebrates difference within a culture of respect and cooperation. We appreciate that a culture which promotes equality will create a positive environment and a shared sense of belonging for all who work, learn and use the services of the College.

The promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion is integral to the pursuit of the College Mission:

To ensure achievement, progression and employment opportunities through outstanding delivery of technical, vocational and academic education and skills

The College aims to create a culture of inclusiveness and to challenge discrimination in order to remove barriers to the educational and personal progression of individual learners. To achieve this aim the college will not tolerate unfair or unlawful discrimination.

The policy encompasses the general equality duty, addressing the following protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnerships
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation.

The Socio-economic background of an individual is not one of the protected characteristics identified by the Equality Act 2010. However, the College recognises that deprivation can be relevant when guiding and supporting learners through their education. When students have experienced deprivation, they may have poor prior educational attainment and low expectations, which may impact negatively on the success of the individual if they are not identified and supported appropriately.

2. Key terms

The College defines equality, diversity and inclusion in the following ways:

Equality - the fair and lawful treatment of students and staff and the promotion of equality of opportunity between different groups

Diversity – the characteristics and experiences that make each individual who they are

Inclusion – learning and working cultures that recognise and are welcoming of equality and diversity and reflect this in their structures and practices

3. The Legislative Context

The Equality Act 2010 replaced all previous anti-discrimination laws and establishes the public sector Equality Duty. The main aims of the 2010 Act are to provide protection of the protected characteristics from the following prohibited conduct:

- Direct discrimination;
- Indirect discrimination;
- Victimisation; and
- Harassment

The Equality Duty consists of a general duty and some specific duties.

The general duty

Section 149 of the Act imposes a general duty on the College, when exercising its functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and
- Foster good relations between different groups

The legislation makes it clear that complying with the duty might mean treating some people more favourably than others, where doing so is permitted by the Act, such as taking positive action to promote equality, or making reasonable adjustments for disabled people.

The Specific Duties

Section 153 of the Act enables ministers to make regulations imposing specific duties on public bodies. The specific duties are legal requirements designed to help the public bodies meet the general duty.

The current specific duties are:

i. Publication of equality information

Publish information annually to demonstrate compliance with the general equality duty. The information will include information relating to people who share a protected characteristic who are employees or students of the College. The information will be in two main categories:

- information to identify equality issues. Examples of this include equality monitoring information about employees or students, or information about the effect of College activities on people with different protected characteristics.
- information about steps taken to have due regard to the aims of the general equality duty. For example, records about how the College had due regard in making certain decisions, information that was considered in that decision-making (including engagement), consideration of steps to mitigate adverse impacts, or details of policies to address equality concerns.

ii. Publication of equality objectives

Publish equality objectives that are required to further the aims of the general equality duty. The objectives will be specific, measurable and published in an accessible format.

4. Regional Context

At the 2011 census the population of Hampshire had the following characteristics:

Age - Between 2001 and 2011 the working age population has remained stable at 64%. However there has been a large decline amongst young adults aged 25-39 (from 21.6% to 18.9%). Hampshire has an ageing population.

Country of birth - 91.6% of Hampshire's population were born in the UK. At 3.4% Europe is the next largest, including Poland, Germany and Ireland. The Middle East and Asia follows at 2.6%, with India (0.6%) most prominent. Africa accounts for 1.4%, with South Africa at 0.5%.

Marital status - 53.2% of the population are married whilst 27.7% are single. Following the Civil Partnership Act of 2004, civil partnerships are now included. For Hampshire, they are 0.2% - the same as the South East and England and Wales. The proportion of widowed individuals stands at 7.1%.

Religion - Christianity remains the largest religion in Hampshire at 62.4%. Hinduism is the next biggest religion at 0.7% followed closely by Muslim (0.6%) and Buddhism (0.5%). A large percentage said that they had no religion (27.9%), whilst 7.2% did not state any religion at all.

Ethnicity - 91.8% of Hampshire's resident population are 'White British'. Those in other ethnic groups account for 8.2%. The ethnic group 'White Other' accounts for 3.2% including both White Irish and Polish individuals, amongst others. The

Asian ethnic group accounts for 2.7% encompassing Indian and Nepalese ethnicities, with others.

Disability - In Hampshire, 84.3% of the population state their daily activities are 'not limited' by a long term illness whilst 9.1% are 'limited a little' and 6.7% are 'limited a lot' by their illness. The proportion of Hampshire's population who are 'limited a lot' is below both the South East and England and Wales.

Language - In Hampshire 96.8% of people (aged 3+) state English as their 'main language'. Other than English, Nepalese (0.6%) and Polish (0.5%) are the next most common main languages. In Hampshire 1.6% of all households are shown to contain no individuals with English as a main language.

Hampshire County Council Equality & Diversity Profile

5. Involving people in the development and review of the policy

The college seeks to involve staff, students and governors in the development, implementation and assessment of the equality, diversity and inclusion policy. This is achieved by:

- Involving staff in meeting individual needs
- Involving staff in reviewing organisational data
- Involving staff in setting priorities for further data gathering and action planning
- Involving staff and students in assessing the impact of policy and procedures
- Involving students through course reviews
- Involving students through 'learner voice' meetings
- Involving Governors in monitoring relevant college complaints
- Involving senior managers in setting strategic objectives to meet the equality duty

Much of the above work is undertaken and monitored by the college's Equality Forum. The college will also use information on good practice from organisations such as the Equality and Human Rights Commission and relevant government reports.

6. Principles of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

The College aims to be recognised as a leader of equality, diversity and inclusion in its work and as an example of good practice. This Policy sets out the framework within which the college intends to promote equality and prevent discrimination against all members of the College community. The College respects and celebrates the diversity of students and staff, and the social and intellectual benefits of diversity. The College seeks to eliminate direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, victimisation and harassment.

The following principles are central to the College's approach:

- a) Discrimination, harassment and victimisation, direct or indirect, is unjust. It is the right of all individuals to expect fair treatment.

- b) All members of the college - governor, employee, student or visitor - will be valued equally and treated considerately.
- c) The promotion of excellent practice in equality and diversity will be central to all aspects of college life.
- d) All students are entitled to an inclusive learning environment and the provision of an accessible curriculum.
- e) Staff and students are entitled to dignity and respect in the workplace and learning environment.
- f) The commitment and involvement of staff and students is essential to the success of the Policy.

7. Equality Objectives

In order to further the aims of the general equality duty, the College has adopted the following overarching equality objectives:

- To continue to minimise achievement gaps between groups of students who share protected characteristics and those who do not.
- To broaden the collection of monitoring information on staff, students and governors by increasing the number of protected characteristics involved.
- To ensure that learning and teaching demonstrate equality and diversity content and are inclusive.
- To ensure that all staff contribute positively to the ethos of an inclusive College.

Progress towards the achievement of these objectives will be made through the undertaking of specific and measurable actions, set out in the College's equality action plan.

8. Equality Impact Assessments

The College will carry out equality impact assessments on policies and practices, which will cover all protected characteristics. This process will help to identify ways to improve practice, as well as ways to eliminate discrimination and harassment.

9. Publication and promotion

The College will promote and publish the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy by:

- placing it on the College website and on the intranet for students and staff
- making it available on request
- incorporating awareness of the policy in the tutorial process

- carrying out Staff Development workshops, and incorporating awareness of the policy in the induction process for new staff
- briefing contractors and other service provider about the College's policy, and incorporating details of it into the tender process and Service Level Agreements.

10. Monitoring and evaluating the policy

The College will monitor and evaluate the implementation of the policy and its objectives. Progress will be reported annually to the Equality Forum, the Senior Management Team and to governors. The findings of monitoring and evaluation processes will be used to update the policy and its objectives.

For further information, or to request this policy in an alternative format, please contact Iain Wolloff, Deputy Principal on 01252 407011 or i.wolloff@farn-ct.ac.uk