

P O L I C Y

TITLE:	Equality Policy and Equality Objectives 2016 – 2017
AIM:	To set a policy framework which ensures the right to a work or learning experience that promotes equality and inclusion and is free from discrimination and harassment
RELATED POLICIES & PROCEDURES:	Relevant to all College Strategy, Policy and Procedure
DATE FOR IMPLEMENTATION:	<i>Please complete if different from 'Approval date' below.</i>
APPROVED BY:	Directorate November 2016 Board of the Corporation December 2016
DATE OF APPROVAL:	December 2016
DATE OF NEXT REVIEW:	December 2017
DISTRIBUTION:	All staff, learners and the public via the College intranet and external website
VERSION CONTROL:	Previous version approved December 2015
PERSON RESPONSIBLE:	Director of Learner Services, Planning and Diversity

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT		
Phase 1 Initial Screening completed	Date:	22 November 2011
Phase 2 Full impact assessment completed/ not required	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not required	<i>(please tick if appropriate)</i>
	Completed on (if applicable):	
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EQUALITY POLICY

1. SCOPE AND PUPOSE

The College's commitment to equality and diversity is reflected in our values:

- East Riding College strives to achieve success for its community – the needs of learners and stakeholders come first
- Learners and staff will be treated with respect and consideration as individuals whose contribution to the College is recognised;
- Quality is at the heart of all that we do. We aim to be responsive and efficient, offering value for money. In our pursuit of excellence we recognise that individually and collectively we can always improve. We are accountable for results;
- Equality of opportunity and the promotion of diversity and safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults are commitments which all members of the college actively pursue;
- The willingness to contribute to and respond to change is fundamental to our success; and
- Clarity and openness of communication are essential throughout the college.

Similarly, Equality and Diversity are key to the achievement of each of the College's priorities:

- Maintain responsiveness and learner choice;
- Continuously improve quality and standards
- Support the growth of the regional economy
- Improve our effectiveness and efficiency

The Equality Objectives and Implementation Plan, set out how the College will fulfil its statutory duty to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

The plan places equality at the centre of our work, both in fulfilling our remit to deliver learning and skills, and in our action as an employer.

The Policy and associated Equality Objectives are consistent the College's Public Sector Equality Duty, both General and Specific, as both an employer and a provider of education and training, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

The Act protects those who share an aspect of their identity, defined as a 'protected characteristic', relating to:

Race
Disability
Gender
Age
Sexual orientation
Religion and Belief
Gender Reassignment
Pregnancy and maternity
Marriage and civil partnership

The College's Duty as an employer, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, extends to all nine protected characteristics and as a provider of education and training to all except marriage and civil partnerships.

A shared understanding of equality and diversity is a pre-requisite to the College's success.

Equality is defined as:

- Providing equality of opportunity for all regardless, for example, of gender, disability, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, culture or religion.
- The removal of barriers that would otherwise prevent participation fully in society.

Diversity may be defined as:

- Recognising, accepting and valuing difference. Difference might relate to gender, abilities and disabilities, ethnic origin, age, sexual orientation, culture, religion or socio-economic group.
- Believing that difference shouldn't be a barrier.

2. STATEMENT OF INTENT

The College is fully committed to:

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advancing equality of opportunity
- Fostering good relations

The advancement of equality of opportunity is integral to the provision of all services. The College is firmly committed to the principle that all learners, members of staff and the community are entitled to equality of opportunity.

The College will encourage and support the development of a culture in which:

- people's ability to achieve their potential is not limited by prejudice or discrimination;
- there is respect for and protection of each individual's human rights;
- there is respect for the dignity and worth of each individual;
- each individual has an equal opportunity to participate in society; and
- there is a mutual respect between groups based on an understanding and valuing of diversity and a shared respect for equality and human rights.

Our policy reflects the broad range of issues connected with the College's mission to serve its various communities and the need to provide equality of opportunity to all its client groups. We will:

- comply with the law in advancing equality and where appropriate go beyond the legal requirements
- ensure that all learners succeed and can progress in ways that match their abilities and aspirations
- be an organisation that harnesses the talents of all, and does not tolerate any form of discrimination or harassment.

We will judge our success by:

- our progress in improving participation, experience, achievement and progression in areas where there is currently inequality
- our effectiveness in responding promptly and effectively to reports of bullying and harassment
- building action for equality and diversity into our plans and delivering them
- a positive approach to equality and diversity among all our staff and their record in implementing this Policy

- the views of learners and staff on how well we are doing
- our progress in recruiting a diverse workforce and demonstrating best practice as an employer

3. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The College will pay due regard to the relevant legislative framework, particularly the Equality Act 2010 which consolidates previous legislation with the aim of;

- Simplifying, streamlining and harmonising the law
- Strengthening the law
- Supporting progress in promoting equality and achieving year on year improvement in outcomes

The Act introduced a Public Sector Equality Duty to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

The duty covers each of the nine protected characteristics although only the first 'arm' of the new duty, 'to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation' will apply to marriage and civil partnerships.

The obligation to advance equality of opportunity includes a requirement to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantage experienced by persons who share a protected characteristic.
- Take steps to meet the needs of those who share a protected characteristic, particularly where those needs differ from those who do not share the protected characteristic.
- Encourage persons with a protected characteristic to participate in public life or any other activities where participation is disproportionately low.

The general duty is underpinned by a new specific duty requiring public sector organisations to:

- To set and publish equality objectives at least every four years
- To publish information, at least annually

In setting its Equality Objectives the College will consider;

- All 'arms' of the general duty.
- All functions and activities, including employment functions, service delivery, and contracted out functions. Some functions will be relevant to all protected characteristics, such as staff recruitment, others might only be relevant to one 'arm' of the duty or to some, but not all, protected characteristics.
- Equality information, including the effect of policies and practices on employees, students and others who share a protected characteristic e.g. learner participation, retention and achievement, staff recruitment and engagement in staff development activity.
- The information pertinent to each of the objectives and the necessary analysis of that information
- Engagement activities

All information will be published in a way which makes it easy for people to access it.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

The Governing Body

The Governors are responsible for:

- ensuring that the institution meets all of its legislative duties
- ensuring that the Equality Policy and its procedures are followed

The Principal and Directorate

The Principal and Directorate are responsible for:

- giving a consistent and high profile lead on equality issues
- promoting and advancing equality inside and outside the institution
- making sure the Single Equality Policy and its procedures are followed

The Principal, the Director of Learner Services, Planning and Diversity and the Director of Human Resources will take overall responsibility for the policy, its implementation, monitoring and review.

Managers

Managers are responsible for:

- putting the policy and its strategies and procedures into practice
- making sure all staff know their responsibilities and receive support and training in carrying these out
- following the relevant procedures and taking action against staff or learners who discriminate, harass or victimise those who share a protected characteristic

Equality and Diversity Committee

The Committee is responsible for:

- Coordinating work on equality and diversity
- Developing and implementing strategies to address any inequalities identified

All staff

Every member of staff has a responsibility to:

- ensure that they are aware of the College's statutory duties in relation to equality legislation
- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful
- eliminate harassment and victimisation of those who share the protected characteristics
- promote positive attitudes towards all
- advance equality of opportunity
- keep up-to-date with equality legislation and taking up training and learning opportunities

5. ENGAGEMENT WITH STAKEHOLDERS

The College will seek to achieve improved outcomes for all by actively engaging those from protected groups in policy and decision-making activities including the development of the College's Equality Objectives.

To ensure that involvement will be accessible to all, a range of methods will be employed, including:

- staff and student satisfaction surveys
- consultation with discrete focus groups that include representation from protected groups
- existing consultation mechanisms such as the College Staff Group, the JCNC and staff and learner focus groups

6. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Impact assessments of policies and procedures are undertaken to ensure that College activities do not inadvertently disadvantage people because of their gender, ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity and that opportunities to better promote equality are identified and taken.

- A review schedule has been established for all policies. All revisions to policies and strategies are subject to initial impact assessment utilising a diagnostic Impact Assessment Tool designed to assess the extent to which the policy or strategy might disadvantage any or all protected groups
- Policies and strategies requiring full impact assessment will be subject to consultation which will include a consideration of the extent to which protected groups might be disadvantaged.
- The manager responsible for the policy will review and amend it in the light of feedback from consultation.
- New policies will be impact-assessed at inception.

7. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Equality and Diversity Committee will monitor the effectiveness of the Equality Policy, identifying areas for action. The Equality Policy and Equality Objectives will be reviewed and revised at least every four years, with a report on progress towards the achievement of the Equality Objectives published annually. The Annual Report will be disseminated throughout the College and published on the College website.

The Annual Report will incorporate information on;

- the effect of policies and practices on employees, students and others who share a protected characteristic
- The progress towards each of the equality objectives based upon an analysis of information relevant to each of the objectives
- Details of the information analysed to determine the progress towards the achievement of the equality objectives
- Details of engagement activities carried out