



HERTFORD REGIONAL COLLEGE

Single Equality Scheme

2020-2023

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Scope and Purpose

Hertford Regional College is passionate about equality and diversity and strives not only to meet its statutory requirements but to embed equality and diversity into all that we do. We are committed to social cohesion and recognise the benefits that diversity brings to the organisation and the wider community it serves. The Single Equality Scheme is a public commitment to fulfil the legal duties which are to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
3. *Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not*

These are placed on the College as it aims to advance equality of opportunity and eliminate unlawful discrimination in service delivery and employment.

Hertford Regional College draws its staff and students from a wide range of backgrounds. Our educational provision, services and partnerships provide opportunities for people with an equally wide range of abilities and aspirations. Against that background, our commitment is demonstrated through our Single Equality Scheme which focuses on the key areas of our service delivery, employment practices and our working practices to meet the needs of students, staff and other stakeholders.

This Scheme and associated policy and procedures describe how the College sets out to fulfil its moral, social and legal obligations to put equality, diversity and inclusion at the heart of everything we do. It is based on the knowledge that discrimination exists within today's society and that discrimination prevents people from realising their full potential. The Scheme and all associated procedures support us in our strategic objectives and values and behaviours and applies to all staff and students.

Through this scheme the College seeks to:

- Provide the workforce, learners and partner organisations (including suppliers and employers who provide work experience opportunities for learners) with a clear statement of our intent on equality matters
- Implement the requirements of the Equality Act (2010) with one comprehensive scheme of good practice for the treatment of its staff, learners and other members of the College community
- Eliminate any unlawful discrimination in criteria set for admission to courses by unfair treatment with regard to access to facilities, services or other benefits or by any other unfavourable treatment of a learner
- Eliminate any unlawful discrimination in criteria set for the recruitment and employment of staff
- Highlight current legislation on equality to tackle discrimination

- Make the members of the College community aware of the Scheme and their responsibilities to promote choice, opportunity and progression for all learners and staff in accordance with the law
- Create a working and study environment underpinned by fair and equitable practices and procedures in which all members of the College community can feel comfortable
- Ensure this scheme is supported by other relevant College policies and procedures.

Statement of Policy

Hertford Regional College is committed to achieving equality of opportunity, social inclusion and parity of esteem for all who study, work, visit and engage with the College. The College aims to ensure that in celebrating diversity it operates fairly irrespective of a person's disability, gender, race, age, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marital status or due to pregnancy and maternity.

The College is committed to the elimination of discrimination, harassment and victimisation on any of the above grounds.

What This Means

There is a responsibility on all learners, employees, visitors and individuals who engage with the College to treat each other with dignity and respect.

The College seeks to recruit a student population and attract a workforce that reflects the diversity of the wider community it serves.

No student, employee, volunteer or applicant should be disadvantaged or treated less favourably because of conditions or requirements that cannot be justified.

The College will seek to make reasonable adjustments to its arrangements and premises with a view to avoiding substantial disadvantage for disabled individuals compared to able bodied people.

How We Show Our Commitment

The College will ensure that individuals are treated equally and fairly and that decisions on admission and recruitment, staff selection for training, career progression and management, exclusion from learning or the termination of employment, are based solely on objective and relevant criteria.

The College will seek to provide a learning and a working environment that is free from unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

The College will not tolerate any discriminatory behaviour, which breaches its Single Equality Scheme and will initiate action, which may be of a disciplinary nature if circumstances warrant, against those who contravene them.

The College will seek to ensure that no one in learning or in its employment is disadvantaged from being able to realise their full potential by taking steps to identify, address, eliminate or minimise any unnecessary or artificial regulations, requirements or conditions that cannot be shown to be directly relevant to maximising an individual's performance.

The College will actively promote Equality & Diversity and good relations between diverse groups.

The College will work to narrow achievement gaps between different groups of learners and use progression data in order to maximise potential.

. Through the induction process both staff and students are reminded of Equality and Diversity, this theme is also picked up again via the tutorial scheme and the wider curriculum. Staff will be made aware of the Grievance procedure and learners will be made aware of Complaints procedure.

Both compulsory and non-compulsory training programmes for governors, senior post holders, managers and all staff will be provided to support the Single Equality Scheme.

Information provided about College programmes will be reviewed to ensure that it is clear and easily understood by all potential learners and contains all relevant facts.

Staff will be made more aware of the cultural assumptions, stereotypes and biases which may exist within curriculum materials and assessment methods, and encourage and support them in developing curriculum materials which reflect a wider range of experience and culture.

The curricula offer will be reviewed to ensure that the range of opportunities provided reflects the needs of all sections of the community.

All complaints of an equal opportunities nature, however informal, should be lodged with the Director of Quality, detailing the nature of the complaint and the outcome. In the event that the complaint relates to the Director of Quality, or that they are unavailable the complaint should be lodged with the Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality. Such a record should be kept even if the individuals concerned request anonymity or do not "wish to make the matter formal". The College's Senior Leadership Team will monitor all complaints on a regular basis.

When making a formal complaint or grievance, staff are advised to seek advice from the Human Resources department.

The College, led by its managers, will monitor, evaluate, action plan and implement good practice in relation to the above issues as part of its self-assessment and annual review procedures. Where appropriate, benchmarks will be set. The Inclusion and Impact group are a vital part of this process (please see Appendix 1).

Legal Framework

The Single Equality Scheme supports us in meeting our legal obligations/duties as set out in the Equality Act 2010. The Equality Act harmonises and replaces all previous antidiscrimination legislation to ensure a consistent approach when complying with the law. However, we aspire to make our documents more organic and rather than simply discharging our legal obligations, we would wish our Scheme to be the framework to formulate and action discernible change to our approach to potentially discriminatory issues.

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a new public sector duty (“the duty”) which consists of the general equality duty with its three main aims, and specific duties designed to help the College meet the general duty by improving the focus and transparency of our activities.

The General Duty

In accordance with the general duty the college will, in carrying out our functions, have due regard to the need to:

- a. eliminate all types of discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act;
- b. advance equality of opportunity;
- c. foster good relations.

Eliminating discrimination and advancing equality of opportunity involves:

- removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics;
- taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people;
- encouraging people from protected groups to participate in activities where their participation is disproportionately low;
- taking steps to eliminate harassment related to each protected characteristic; and
- promoting positive attitudes towards each protected characteristic.

‘Due regard’ involves:

- thinking consciously about how existing and proposed policies and practices impact on equality. This includes how employees are treated, the design and delivery of services and how financial decisions are made.

Fostering good relations involves:

- tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups.

Complying with the duty may involve

- treating some people more favourably than others, although it is important to ensure that in doing so there is no breach of the non-discrimination provisions of the act.

The Specific Duties

In accordance with the specific equality duties, the College will, in summary, publish equality information and prepare and work towards equality objectives. Our current objectives and the action plan to support these objectives are subject to on-going review in the light of legislative changes, regional and local priorities and are therefore subject to change. These will be published on our website along with this Scheme.

Protected Characteristics

Our Scheme covers the same groups that were protected under previous equality legislation and are now defined as “protected characteristics”. These are listed as:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Race
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Religion and belief
- Sexual Orientation

In addition to the above protected characteristics, the College also recognises economic circumstances have a significant impact on personal achievement and progress. The College’s catchment area covers a number of disadvantaged wards and various programmes have been developed to enhance the opportunities of learners in gaining employment. We therefore consider these circumstances as appropriate in our action plans.

College Values

As an employer and a learning organisation, we will demonstrate the following **TEAM HRC** values:

- **Trust** – We gain the trust and confidence of our colleagues and customers
- **Enterprise** – We are enterprising in the way we think commercially and respond to our customers
- **Ambition** – We are ambitious, setting realistic yet challenging goals to bring out the best in ourselves and our learners
- **Motivation** – We show our motivation by acting with energy, enthusiasm and a personal drive to succeed
- **Heart** – We recognise that learners, customers and colleagues are the heartbeat of our organisation
- **Respect** – We show respect for ourselves and others by valuing diversity, treating others with courtesy and working collaboratively
- **Commitment** – we are committed to the college and furthering its position within the communities it serves

In addition to these values to promote good behaviour we have our BRAVO code (Be safe, Respect, Always polite, Visible ID, On Time) and we actively promote the four British values via tutorial, curriculum and enrichment.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Aims:

The College will aim to:

- a. continue to develop and raise awareness of equal opportunities across all aspects of the organisation and to work towards staff and students demonstrating confidence in, and commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion;
- b. develop and share good practice in embedding the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion across all aspects of the organisation;
- c. work with learners, staff and external agencies to address the barriers faced by particular groups of people and to allow full participation in the promotion of equality and diversity;
- d. monitor, measure and evaluate the impact of equality and diversity policies, provision and action plans.
- e. Encourage people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

Organisational Targets

The College aims to:

- reduce any disparity in the success rates of different learner groups by deciding on and monitoring Key Performance Indicators.
- reduce any disparity in the recruitment, internal progression and participation in continuous professional development activities in the employment of staff
- Ensure the safety, wellbeing and inclusion of learners across all protected characteristics (comparable stats on bullying, disciplinary, student satisfaction etc.)

The annual Equality and Diversity Report and Action Plan are the key documents for reviewing progress against Key Performance Indicators and setting actions for the year ahead.

Roles and Responsibilities

All individuals at Hertford Regional College have a responsibility for the successful operation of this Scheme and associated procedures. This includes staff, learners, customers, Governors and stakeholders.

Where adherence to the principles of this Scheme and associated policies and procedures falls below what is expected, individuals are encouraged to be vigilant and report instances and concerns. We commit to investigate all concerns and take action as appropriate through our relevant processes.

Leadership and Management

The College's commitment to Equality and Diversity is driven at the highest level with Governors and the Senior Leadership Team who are committed to supporting and driving developments in equality. The Director of Quality chairs the Inclusion and Impact Group and Governors are aware of the Corporation's legal responsibilities relating to the Equality Act and regularly review the College's progress against the Equality Objectives. Governors receive and respond to the monitoring information on staff and learners.

As an employer, the Corporation is committed to ensuring that the procedures for recruitment, training and promotion of staff demonstrate the best practice in terms of equality and diversity. Members of the Senior Leadership Team are committed to creating a positive, inclusive ethos in the College. They take a lead in challenging discriminatory behaviour on the part of the managers, staff or learners and take responsibility for ensuring that all aspects of College policy and activity are sensitive to equality issues.

Strong strategic direction from senior leaders and Governors ensures a culture of mutual respect is promoted effectively and staff, at all levels, are informed and aware of their responsibilities in relation to equality.

Staff Training and Development

The College recognises that one of the key factors in ensuring that our Single Equality Scheme is a success is underpinned by the need to educate, train and raise awareness of our Scheme and any action plans. We will seek to undertake this by a number of mechanisms, building on the on-going initiatives within the College.

The College ensures the effective promotion of diverse training and development methods to engage staff in all areas of training including equality training. Staff training in the requirements of equality legislation is integrated as part of the induction for all new employees and Governors. The on-line training is a mandatory requirement for all staff. Where there is a need to raise awareness or train staff in relation to equality and diversity in its widest sense these will be facilitated as appropriately as part of our training priorities/plan.

Learner Involvement

Students may influence the Equality & Diversity agenda by:

- Contributing to various learner forums
- Completing surveys
- Contributing to Student Council meetings
- Raising issues through their personal tutor, student governor or student liaison officer.

Accountability

- The Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality is responsible to the Inclusion & Impact Group (Appendix 1) for the legal currency, publication and monitoring of this Scheme
- Working in accordance with the College Equality and Diversity Framework (Appendix 2) the Inclusion & Impact Group is responsible for providing:

- Advice on College equality policies and procedures to ensure that they are in line with legal requirements and best practice guidance
- Monitoring the effectiveness of College equality and diversity strategies and advising governors and managers on their further development
- Analysis and evaluation of the effectiveness of strategies designed to ensure fair access to services and to close any equality gaps
- Advising on the extent to which the advancement of equality of opportunity is consistent across all areas of the College
- Advising on appropriate strategies for recruitment and employment of staff
- Advice on the delivery of relevant staff development and training
- The whole workforce is responsible for ensuring the College remains an Equal Opportunities compliant learning provider
- All our learners are responsible for their behaviour in accordance with the College's Improving Behaviour campaign (BRAVO), as located on Staffnet/Moodle.

Consultation

Prior to ratification by the Board of Corporation this policy will have been considered by the following:

- Inclusion & Impact Group
- Senior Leadership Team
- Student Voice

Equality & Diversity Impact Statement

The Single Equality Scheme enables the College to meet its duties and advance equality of opportunity. It complies with the Equality Act and represents good practice.

The Scheme objectives will be implemented through cultural change, the development of competencies, coaching and other organisational development tools.

Date of document establishment and initial approval	December 2010
Version number	Version 6
Approving body	Board of Corporation
Designated owner	Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality
Linked policies and procedures	All Curriculum, Quality, Student Services and HR policies
Date of last review	July 2020
Date of next review	July 2023

Appendix 1: Composition of the Inclusion & Impact Task Group and Terms of Reference

Composition of the Inclusion and Impact Task Group

The IITG Group will be comprised of the following:

Director of Quality (Chair)

VP Curriculum and Quality
Director of HR and Corporate Development
Professional Development Manager
Head of Student Services
Head of MIS
Directors of Curriculum
VP Enterprise and Innovation
Student Services Manager
Learning Support Manager

Frequency of Group Meetings

Inclusion and Impact Task Group should meet a minimum of five times a year..

Objectives of the group

- Produce Impact assessment templates for use across all college departments to assess how policies, processes and procedures impact on and actively include all members of our college community
- Actively seek the views of governors, learners, staff, parents and partners in respect of the colleges work as an inclusive employer and provider of education
- Actively consult with key cross college groups
- Review the statutory calculations every year showing how large the pay gap is between male and female employees and ensure these are published on the website in accordance with The Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017
- Collecting and reviewing the evidence of the college's promotion of equality and diversity in line with the Common Inspection Framework and Equalities act, to include the production of the annual objectives and report
- Setting the expectations of creating, maintaining and enhancing the college's inclusive culture and role modelling the behaviour expected of managers and staff
- Report on the impact of the work of the group to SLT and governors

Appendix 2: The College Equality & Diversity Framework

