

2.3 Equal Opportunities

The College is committed to the active pursuit of equality policies which ensures the right of everyone in the College to be treated with respect.

The College strives to prevent and eliminate any discrimination between people on the grounds of age, gender, race, colour, nationality, social or ethnic origins, creed, disability, HIV status, sexual orientation, marital or parental status, political or religious belief, economic class, language, trade union membership, or other irrelevant distinction.

The College encourages all individuals to realise their full potential in an environment in which a diversity of backgrounds and experiences is valued.

The College creates conditions whereby the treatment of prospective or existing students and staff is on the basis of their relative merits, skills, abilities and potential.

The College believes that achievement of equality of opportunity will be in the best interests of the organisation as a whole and its individual members. The College has a continuing programme of action to promote diversity and equality of opportunity throughout the organisation.

Policy Aims:

- to put equality at the heart of policy, practices and procedures and developing a mainstream approach to equality issues.
- to maintain and advance our equal opportunity policies through promoting participation and inclusion with prospective and current staff and students.
- to consult widely and communicate using equality sensitive language and creating a climate where respect is fostered and prejudice is unacceptable.
- to promote fair procedures for the recruitment, selection and promotion of staff and for the admission and assessment of students.
- to raise awareness and understanding through training and guidance in equal opportunities for all staff and specialist training for those involved in the recruitment, appraisal and review of staff and students.
- to monitor, evaluate and continually improve policy, practices and procedures to ensure best practice.

Policy Commitments:

- to provide guidance and encouragement to College staff and students to integrate the principles and practice of equality of opportunity into all aspects of College life.
- to encourage equal opportunities to be consistent with the broader aims of the College, in making a vital contribution to the core activities of teaching, learning, research, and creative endeavour.
- to ensure College students and staff all share the responsibility of going beyond the avoidance of unfair discrimination, to the encouragement, wherever practicable, of activities, which reflect a diversity of cultural experience.
- to recognise the need to identify specific areas for future action within the field of equal opportunities in academic affairs so that the policy may have practical outcomes.

Equal Opportunities Policy in Practice:

Student Admissions

The College welcomes applications from potential students of all backgrounds, while at the same time selecting students who have the ability and motivation to benefit from courses and life at the College. In the spirit of current legislation, the College will undertake reasonable adjustments for qualified applicants with disabilities to enter the College. The College will ensure that a wide range of factors is taken into account by selectors in the admissions process, such as life experience, breadth of interests and level of motivation.

Monitoring

The College is committed to a programme of monitoring in undergraduate, postgraduate admissions and staff appointments. The results of such monitoring will be reviewed by the Academic Council Audits Committees to consider the implications for equal opportunities, and to take action where appropriate.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Teaching, learning and assessment strategies should be equitable, undertaken with awareness of the different needs of students, and be directed towards the encouragement of artistic, academic and personal development. Within a context of academic excellence, the College recognises the contribution of a diverse student body to the learning environment, and further recognises the importance of encouraging such diversity to be reflected in the content of courses, learning methods and forms of assessment, where appropriate.

Access for Disabled or Disadvantaged people

The College will continue to make provision for, to monitor and to review, the needs of particular groups of students and staff. It believes that those with disabilities or overcoming disadvantage should have access to the full range of

academic, social and cultural activities in the College. The College will undertake reasonable adjustments to meet both the general need for access and the specific needs of individuals with disabilities or are disadvantaged who wish to benefit from those activities. It will ensure that such individuals are adequately and appropriately consulted about their needs and their views taken into account. The College is committed to a programme of continuing improvement in increasing access for disabled students and widening participation.

Facilities and Services

All facilities and services provided by or in association with the College, including Student Support services, should operate in accordance with the College's Equal Opportunities Policy. Where special facilities or arrangements are provided these will be clearly indicated in the College prospectus and other literature.

Special Religious or Cultural needs

The College will make reasonable efforts and adjustments to meet the special needs of any individual arising from religious, cultural or dietary obligations.

Harassment

The College aims to create a stimulating and supportive environment for learning, artistic development and research. It accepts that such an environment cannot be created or sustained if students are individually or collectively subject to harassment, intimidation, victimisation, aggression or coercion. Personal harassment will be regarded as a serious matter, which could result in disciplinary action being taken against the harasser. A full account of the College's Harassment Policy is detailed in the Disciplinary, Grievance and Harassment Section of this handbook.

Complaints Procedure

The College will give a full hearing to any applicant or student who believes that he or she has been treated in a way, which is not consistent with the Equal Opportunities Policy.

Equality Responsibilities & Contact Points

The Board of Governors and the Principal are ultimately responsible for the implementation of equal opportunity policies. Human Resources will offer help and support in relation to equal opportunities for staff, and will be responsible for receiving preliminary complaints, and for advising on action where appropriate.