



## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

**AREA:** | **Operations**

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**TOPIC:** | **College Equal Opportunities Policy**

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### **Our Commitment**

HCT is committed to Equal Opportunities in seeking to provide the best possible experience and environment for all students and employees, consistent with existing limitations on resources. It is committed to working actively to eradicate discrimination, harassment and bullying on the grounds of gender, marital status, race, disability, colour, ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, age, or any other grounds where such discrimination cannot be reasonably justified.

The College believes that:

Appropriate opportunity to participate in FE should be available to anyone wishing to do so, but accepts that access will be limited under the provisions of the Children Act 1989

Curriculum within the College should consider the needs of all current and potential students

All students, staff and visitors should be able to go about their College business in an atmosphere free of intimidation or abuse.

The necessary support should be made available to enable learners of different abilities and needs to progress through the curriculum towards successful achievement.

It is the responsibility of the College to recognise and reflect the positive contributions of men and women of different social backgrounds, cultures, religions, abilities, ages and sexual orientation to college.

The College requires all staff and students to accept and implement this policy, copies of which will be kept in main administrative offices, the Main Reception area and in the College Learning Resources Centre.

### **Scope**

All aspects of the College provision are covered by this Equal Opportunities policy.

### **Accountability**

- The College Governors are responsible for promoting equal opportunities on behalf of the Corporation, and for ensuring that effective policies and procedures are in place to ensure and continuously improve the quality of equal opportunities throughout the College.

- The Principal is responsible to the College Corporation for ensuring that equal opportunities is continuously promoted and comprehensively implemented in all aspects of the College's operation
- The Equal Opportunities Committee is responsible for promoting, monitoring and reviewing the equal opportunities policy, and inclusive learning, and for evaluating its effectiveness.
- The College Personnel Department is responsible for promoting, monitoring and implementation of all aspects of the College's equal opportunities policy relating to the employment of staff.
- All Managers of the College are responsible for promoting equal opportunities, for improving the equal opportunities performance of their individual area and for ensuring that effective monitoring and review systems are in place.
- All employees of the College have a responsibility for implementing the equal opportunities policy and promoting equal opportunities in all aspects of their work.

### **Training**

As part of its responsibility, the College will ensure that all staff receive appropriate information and staff development training on their rights and responsibilities with regard to equal opportunities legislation and the College's equal opportunities policies and procedures. It will also ensure that all personnel connected to the College are aware of the policy and its implications.

### **Period of Review**

The policy will be reviewed by the Committee at least every 3 years.

### **Evaluation Method**

The Equal Opportunities Manager will make an annual report to the Equal Opportunities Committee, based on performance indicators, and make relevant development proposals. Once reviewed, this report will be made available to all on request.

Key performance indicators will include:

- a) Students' achievement, enrolment and retention data in comparison with ethnic origin, age, gender, religion, postcode area, disability profile and additional support requirements, where such data is available.
- b) A breakdown of staff profiles by age, ethnicity, gender, disability profile and length of employment where such data are available.
- c) Brief reports from course teams detailing how they have reviewed course delivery to eliminate prejudicial or discriminatory stereotypes.
- d) Attendance reports at Equal Opportunities events and training sessions.
- e) Number of complaints made relating to Equal Opportunities compared to total number of students and/or staff, including details of the outcome of these complaints.
- f) Comments or suggestions from staff, students or other interested parties.

## Policy Content

- a) HCT seeks to ensure equality of opportunity and treatment for all persons in relation to all of its activities, such as the employment of staff, consultants and contractors, the provision of educational opportunities, and the provision of training and other services to individuals and organisations.
- b) HCT recognises the existence of institutionalised discrimination, including institutional racism, and is committed to addressing areas of institutional failure, in relation to issues of racism, sexism, disability, sexuality and other inequalities.
- c) HCT will work actively to encourage maximum access to the full range of courses (including work-based or outreach courses) and other educational services for people of all social backgrounds and cultures. This includes monitoring patterns of recruitment to courses and working to ensure that course recruitment is based only on student needs and aptitudes. Applicants for courses will be given clear and accurate information through advertisements, prospectuses, course leaflets, tasters, interviews and other appropriate methods. Unless there is a genuine occupational qualification, recruitment media should not imply a preference for one group of applicants. The College however, having investigated all possible learning support packages, reserves the right to refuse admission where it is clear that a suitable programme cannot be delivered, and may limit access to certain types of course in line with legal requirements (e.g. Childcare courses under the provision of the Childrens Act 1989)
- d) All staff recruitment information will include requirements that are necessary and justifiable for the effective performance of the job. Consistent criteria will be used when considering applicants for jobs, and those criteria will be made available to applicants. All interviews will be thorough, objective, and deal only with the applicant's suitability for the job.
- e) All staff will be encouraged to discuss their training needs with their line-manager as part of the appraisal procedure. The college will not discriminate unfairly in the allocation of duties and responsibilities.
- f) The College will actively promote staff training and development in Equal Opportunities for all employees, both at staff induction, and at regular intervals throughout their employment.
- g) All staff training and development will target staff at appropriate levels without discrimination.
- h) Student induction should also involve clarification of HCT's policy on Equal Opportunities.
- i) College Programme Leaders will monitor and review the curriculum, and the learning resources used to deliver it, to ensure that they reflect and promote equal opportunities.
- j) All College staff have a responsibility to ensure equality of treatment for all students where external agencies are involved e.g. work placements.
- k) The College will develop partnerships with organisations and groups within Herefordshire to help develop equal opportunities and positive action projects for the benefit of the wider community.

- l) The College will ensure that marketing strategies reflect its equal opportunities good practice and commitment within the College, to outside agencies and to potential staff and students. College provision is also to be actively and appropriately promoted to all sections of the community. This should include initiatives targeted in appropriate ways at under-represented groups.
- m) The College will ensure that its equal opportunities policy is publicised as widely as possible to its community, including students, staff, contractors, consultants, clients and members of partner organisations.
- n) The Training Division's commitment to Equal Opportunities will be given wide publicity throughout the Division to outside Agencies and potential Staff, Trainees and Apprentices.
- o) Work placements used by the Training Division are required to accept and implement College Equal Opportunities policies. All Trainees/Apprentices and Work Placement Providers will be issued with an Equal Opportunities Statement. Work Placement Providers will be visited prior to the young person commencing a programme with them to ensure amongst other criteria that they are aware of the Training Division's Equal Opportunities Policies and they themselves operate an Equal Opportunities policy. Failure to comply with current legislation will result in the Training Division not initiating the placement or, if the non-compliance is discovered at a later date, withdrawing the young person.
- p) All staff will be encouraged to liaise with Connexions (careers) staff to take into account the particular needs of individual students, e.g. literacy and numeracy support, special help to overcome problems.
- q) In the event that staff or students are alleged to be in breach of the College's Equal Opportunities Policy, an investigation will be carried out in accordance with agreed procedures.  
  
Depending on the outcome, guidance, advice, counselling and training will be offered, but in the event of serious or disciplinary action will be instigated.
- r) The College will review the effectiveness of procedures designed to enable students, staff or clients to raise issues of concern about equal opportunities, and to make complaints about discrimination, harassment or bullying.
- s) The College operates within a set of agreed Equal Opportunities definitions, which can be found as an Appendix to this policy.
- t) All College documents – such as the College Charter, Disability Statement, and this Policy are to be freely available in a variety of formats, such as large print, audio cassette, and video, as is appropriate to current, future and potential students and staff.
- u) Where appropriate, the college will seek advice on Equal Opportunities issues from local groups such as ethnic minority, disability and women's organisations in Herefordshire, as well as outside agencies such as race equality councils, the CRE, The Unemployment Unit, MIND and Age Concern.

NB – 'students' refers also to trainees and apprentices

### *Addendum to the Equal Opportunities Policy*

#### A. Race Equality Statement

It is our intention to make the promotion of Race Equality central to the way we work and to all areas of our work, including policy making, service delivery, regulation and enforcement and employment practice.

#### **Strategy**

The aims of our strategy will be to:

- Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- Promote equality of opportunity
- Promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

We will achieve these aims by:-

- Reviewing all of our corporate policies and procedures in the light of the specific duties for colleges under the 1976 Race Relations Act
- Assessing the impact of the policies on groups of students and staff from different racial groups.
- Monitoring, by reference to those racial groups, the admission of, and progress of students and the recruitment and career progression of staff.
- Publish annually the results of the monitoring.

#### B. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Act 2001 Statement of Intent (2002/3) [DDA]

It is our intention to ensure that disabled people have the same opportunities as non-disabled people to benefit from Education or other related provision.

We aim to achieve this assurance by:

- Creating reasonable adjustments to provision wherever possible to ensure that disabled people are not disadvantaged (September 2002).

#### **Implementation of Race Equality and DDS Policy Statement**

Positive action will be taken by targeting training and recruitment to encourage and support members from under-represented groups and to manage diversity issues appropriately.

Examples of actions which we may adopt will be:

- Providing more 'access' programmes to certain courses
- Marketing our provision at under-represented groups
- Provide diversity-awareness training for staff.
- Encouraging under represented staff to attend appropriate courses.
- Word, design and place job advertisements to encourage applicants from under-represented groups to apply.
- Develop recruitment and training schemes aimed at under-represented groups of staff and students.
- Train staff who lack qualifications or skills but show potential

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Originator: Director of Curriculum & Quality

Reviewed: August 2005  
Updated: February 2002

- Provide language and other forms of support for staff and students.

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