



EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY & PROCEDURE

August 2008

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

1 POLICY STATEMENT

Coleg Powys is committed to the promotion of equality of opportunities in all of its activities and to encourage all groups, irrespective of race, colour or ethnic origins, socio-economic status, gender, age, disability or sexual orientation.

The College is working to create an environment in which cultural diversity and individual differences are positively valued in an atmosphere free from any harassment and discrimination.

The College will promote access to and extend opportunities in education, training and employment to those groups identified as under-represented in Further/Vocational Education and linked to the delivery of the national and local priorities. It will actively seek to address issues related to rurality, levels of programmes, development of needs based outreach provision, access and usage of appropriate learning technologies and extensive use of flexible and distance learning systems to deliver the stated learning objectives.

The College recognises the importance of equality of opportunity as central to the efficiency and development of the institution. As a provider of education, learning, training and employment, the College will take positive action to implement this policy and to monitor and evaluate its development.

The College takes its legal and moral obligations with respect to EO seriously, in that it promote active dialogue with different groups and individuals on ways to positively enhance and improve the service provision for delivery at all levels.

The College will not tolerate any form of behaviour or activity that discriminates on the grounds of gender, marital status, family responsibilities, sexual orientation, colour, race, nationality, religious belief, ethnicity, disability, age and unrelated criminal convictions.

The College has a Welsh Language Scheme which separately identifies its commitment to treating the English and Welsh languages on the basis of equality and sets out its policies and procedures in this regard.

Policy Implementation

The College will ensure that its equal opportunity policy commitments are delivered through the following strategies and processes:

- the setting, monitoring and evaluation of equality targets
- the implementation, monitoring and review of an action plan with explicit measurable and achievable objectives
- staff development programmes to support staff at all levels of the organisation in the delivery of equal opportunity objectives
- assigning specific responsibilities to staff for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, targets, actions and outcomes
- working with local and national organisations in the field of diversity, inclusion and equality to enhance equal opportunities
- ensuring that quality assurance and self-assessment processes incorporate equality issues

- consulting with students, staff and the community on policy development
- reporting on progress against equality objectives to the Equal Opportunities Committee, Senior Management Team, Academic Board and the Board of Governors
- assessing the impact of policies and practices where appropriate

Staff Recruitment and Development

Coleg Powys will take positive action to ensure that under-represented groups are encouraged to apply for vacant posts at different levels throughout the College. The College may actively seek members with proficiency in the Welsh Language to support the development of the bi-lingual provision.

The College will ensure that:

1. The profile of staff in relation to age, gender, disability and race is monitored across all areas of work and at all levels;
2. Recruitment procedures and associated documents are non-discriminatory;
3. Consideration is given to under-represented groups when reviewing or drawing up new job descriptions/specifications for vacancies;
4. Recruitment and selection panels are trained in Equal Opportunities Policy issues;
5. Candidates' views on the recruitment process are sought and feedback provided to candidates if requested;
6. In cases of alleged discrimination or unfair treatment, the complaints procedure is implemented;
7. Consideration is given to work life balance and family friendly working practices. Staff also have access to a trained counsellor;
8. All staff receive a comprehensive induction programme which can include coaching, mentoring and networking opportunities;
9. All staff have access to continuous professional development under the Performance Management and Review process.

Programme and Course Provision

The College will support targeted provision for those groups that are under-represented. All course interviews will be conducted to support the needs of the diverse groups.

The College will ensure that:

1. Effective monitoring of applications, enrolments and outcomes is undertaken;
2. Certain targeted programmes are, where possible, delivered through the medium of Welsh;
3. All curriculum areas recruit from the whole community and thereby promote wider participation and address any imbalances;

4. Prospective learners have access to information on grants, accommodation, hardship funds and benefits;
5. Impartial information, advice and guidance are given to prospective learners or clients about potential opportunities available within the College;
6. Learners have access to support, advice and counselling on personal and confidential issues. Where possible, this advice can be offered through the medium of Welsh;
7. Employers, community groups and stakeholder organisations are consulted regarding the provision of suitable programmes and learning opportunities to meet their needs;
8. Learners are not disadvantaged through caring responsibilities;
9. All qualifications and learning programmes are free from discriminatory practices.

The Curriculum

Curriculum development and delivery will address the variety of experiences, cultural background, skills and needs which students bring to their learning.

The College will aim to ensure:

1. All learners of the College shall be given an induction with a summary of the Equal Opportunities Policy;
2. Complaints related to the application of the Policy shall be investigated in accordance with the College's established Grievance Procedures;
3. Teaching and learning methods and materials are non-discriminatory and promote inclusion and diversity;
4. All learners will have access to Learning Support if required;
5. A variety of methods are used to promote access and participation including a flexible modular programme and the use of ILT, where possible;
6. Good practice is identified and promoted;
7. Inclusive learning is actively promoted to encourage the integration of learners with learning difficulties / disabilities onto courses;
8. That curriculum design takes full account of progression and accreditation of prior learning.

Marketing and Publicity

The College will endeavour to reach every member of the community it serves through its marketing and publicity strategies.

The College will aim to ensure that:

1. All College publicity materials are produced bilingually, where appropriate;
2. Appropriate media are used to attract under-represented/minority groups;
3. Marketing strategies are implemented to support outreach work in the Powys community;
4. Joint marketing approaches with Powys Council and other appropriate organisations are used with specific expertise in marketing to disadvantaged groups;
5. All notices, displays, advertisements are non-discriminatory in context and reflect good practice.

Links with the Community

The College will widen participation and strengthen links with all sections of the community which it serves through the following activities.

The College will ensure:

1. Analysis of the demographic profile of Powys and neighbouring areas is carried out in order to inform planning regarding the needs of all groups in the community—and to assess the relevance of current provision;
2. Networking with statutory, voluntary and other organisations to secure the provision of education in the community;
3. Coleg Powys is represented, where possible on strategic planning groups involving the educational, instructional and voluntary sectors within the Powys region.

College Ethos and Environment

The College will provide a welcoming, safe environment which encourages access by all sections of the community to high quality learning and support facilities.

The College will aim to provide:

1. Accommodation which is welcoming, accessible to all and appropriate for effective learning;
2. An environment in which all users feel safe, secure and free from any harassment or discrimination;
3. Swift action to remove and discourage offensive graffiti occurring in any part of the College buildings;
4. Disciplinary procedures against any student, learner or staff member found behaving in a manner which constitutes harassment or discrimination on grounds of gender, race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, age, disability or sexual orientation;

Implementation, Review and Evaluation

The Institutional Plan provides the overall context for the delivery of the policy.

The Equal Opportunities Policy (EOP) is managed through the College's defined organisational structure. The Assistant Principal (Learner Resources) exercises a delegated management role for the overall application of the policy. All members of staff are directly involved in the delivery process and hold a consequential degree of associated responsibility. Programme and Course Team quality assurance systems also contribute to the implementation and monitoring process. During the staff induction process, all members of staff are supplied with a copy of the College's Equal Opportunities Policy.

The policy has a dynamic nature requiring ongoing development. It is reviewed by the Equal Opportunities Working Group and revised copies are available through the College's intranet.

The EOP is subject to annual review and evaluation, whilst new legislation and duties will impact on its continuous development and self assessment process.

Implementation

The Implementation Section sets out the responsibilities of the different sections of the College community for implementing the aims set out in the Policy. This is not an exhaustive list. The Governors are ultimately responsible for ensuring that the Policy is implemented. They will work through the Principal and the Senior Management Team. The senior manager with responsibility for Equal Opportunity is the Assistant Principal, Support for Learning. The College has an Equal Opportunity working group who provides information and advice, develop the policy, monitor, analyse and evaluate data, write equality reports, write action plans based on actions identified by the Board of Governors.

Roles and Responsibilities:

All members of staff are responsible for ensuring that they:

- Are aware of the College's statutory duties in relation to equality/anti-discrimination legislation
- Attend Equal Opportunities training as required
- Challenge or report inappropriate behaviour, including harassment, bullying and racist incidents, by learners, work placement providers, partners, outside contractors, visitors or other members of staff, whether intentional or unintentional, whenever it occurs
- Act in accordance with the College policies designed to combat discrimination and prejudice.

All learners are responsible for ensuring that they:

- Behave with respect towards all members of the College Community
- Adhere to the expectations set out in College Equality Policies
- Do not encourage prejudice or discrimination
- Report to College staff any incidents of harassment, bullying, prejudice or discrimination.

Governors are responsible for:

- Ensuring that the College is promoting Equal Opportunities
- Ensuring the College promotes race equality, eliminating unlawful racial discrimination and promoting good relations between people of different racial groups under the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000)
- Ensuring the College meets its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act, Age and Gender Equality Equality schemes
- Ensuring that any other legal requirements are promoted as and when they arise in relation to equality of opportunities
- Monitoring and reviewing the implementation of the Equal Opportunities Policy and setting targets for improvement where necessary.

Principal:

- The Principal is responsible to the College Corporation for ensuring that equal opportunity is continuously promoted and comprehensively implemented in all aspects of the College's operation.

The Senior Management Team is responsible for:

- Promoting equality of opportunity
- Ensuring the College is meeting its duties under the Race Relations Act and Amendment Act by promoting race equality, identifying which College functions and policies are relevant to most people, prioritising functions and policies and identifying any changes needed, assessing impact of functions and policies on race equality and publishing the results of monitoring and consultations on race equality, age, gender equality and disability equality scheme.
- Ensuring that all promotional material and admissions procedures promote equality and that information, advice, guidance and learning needs assessment and support are available to all learners in appropriate and useful formats (Assistant Principal – Learner Services)
- Evaluating and reviewing department equality targets and action plans identified through the self assessment process and passing a summary to the Assistant Principal - Learner Services
- Ensuring the College Self Assessment Report includes reference to the promotion of Equal Opportunity (Assistant Principal – Learner Services)
- Setting College equality targets, including those for promoting race equality, in strategic planning, the College Development Plan and for the Equal Opportunities Action Plan
- Evaluating Equal Opportunity Reports and reports on progress against action plans
- Ensuring all strategic, operational and developmental plans actively support and promote the aims and ethos of this policy.

Equal Opportunities Working Group is responsible for:

- Collecting, recording and maintaining accurate data on learners' ethnic background, disability, sex and age in accordance with data protection
- Providing statistical data on students as required for monitoring purposes, by ethnic background, disability, sex and age, to the SMT.
- Providing guidance and leadership on the promotion of equal opportunity
- Supporting colleagues and learners in the promotion of equal opportunity
- Analysing the information provided by the monitoring process
- Assessing this against the objectives of the Equal Opportunities Policy to identify how the Policy is working in practice
- Putting forward suggestions for remedying any deficiencies in the system or process.
- Assessing the success of the proposed remedies over time
- Providing advice to senior managers and governors to ensure good equal opportunity practice
- Report to the Senior Management Team on the results of monitoring, analysing and evaluating qualitative and quantitative data and reports on progress against action plans.

Heads of School and Functional Area Managers are responsible for:

- Promoting equality of opportunity
- Ensuring staff and learners comply with the Policy
- Ensuring College timetabled department meetings refer to equality including equality check questions in student course evaluations
- Ensuring that all College wide and external surveys ask for information about ethnic background, disability and sex
- Ensuring team meetings regularly refer to equal opportunities
- Setting department actions and targets for equality and self assessment reports show how the duties required by this policy are being discharged
- Evaluating and reviewing equal opportunity targets and actions through the self-assessment process.

Teachers/Tutorial Staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring all learners receive ongoing information about the Race Equality Policy, the Equal Opportunity Policy and Harassment Policy and Procedures
- Making learners aware of their rights and responsibilities and appropriate action to take in cases of perceived unfair treatment, discrimination, harassment or bullying
- Making learners aware of the College expectation that all members of the College Community are treated with respect

- Being involved as appropriate in disciplinary procedures against students who contravene the College Equal Opportunities Policy
- Promoting equality and diversity in teaching and learning
- Ensuring all schemes of work, lesson content and teaching resources promote equality of opportunity
- Ensuring that resources present positive images avoiding stereotypes by challenging stereotypes and tackling discrimination and prejudice
- Educating learners to be active citizens, living and working in a diverse society.

The Personnel Department is responsible for:

- Ensuring all new staff receive equality information during their induction by ensuring all staff have copies of the Equal Opportunity, Race Equality and Harassment Policies
- Maintaining a staffing profile by ethnic background, disability, gender and age in accordance with data protection
- Providing statistical staffing data to the Equal Opportunity Coordinator and Team for monitoring, analysis and evaluation purposes
- Ensuring good equality practice in all aspects of employment including the selection, recruitment, promotion and dismissal of staff
- Ensuring job advertisements and job specifications do not discriminate by having essential criteria that favour one group over another
- Ensuring that the 'Positive About Disabled People' commitments are implemented
- Ensuring that staff development programmes promote the aims and ethos of this policy
- Ensuring the College complies with all employment equality legislation.

Monitoring and Evaluation

A review of progress will be made through the monitoring of data, analysis and evaluation of results of monitoring, surveys, the annual reports to the Senior Management Team and the through the College self-assessment process. This review will include the results of the analysis and evaluation of data for staff and learners by sex, disability, ethnic background and age. There is an annual Self-Assessment Report with a Mid-year Review, written by the Equal Opportunities Committee with the support of the Team. The Report is submitted to the Senior Management Team. The Report identifies targets for maintaining and improving equality and is subsumed into the Self Assessment Report for Support for Learning.

The annual report related to staffing is developed and evaluated by the Personnel Department. This report looks at staffing by layer of the organization, staff perceptions and includes both qualitative and quantitative data. Statistical data is provided by Payroll and Personnel. Reports, from an equality perspective, on student application, offer, enrolment, achievement and additional support costs data are presented to the Executive through the year. Any issues linked to the Complaints Procedure, learner views/perceptions and additional data analysis and evaluation are included in the summative Annual Equal Opportunities Report.

This Report is based on all the subsidiary reports and makes recommendations for action. The Senior Management Team evaluates this report and considers the recommendations at the end of each academic year.

In summary, the monitoring and evaluation of the Equality Opportunities policy will be conducted through the following performance indicators:- These will include

- Ethnicity, sex, disability and age profile of College staff
- Ethnicity, sex, disability and age profile of College learners
- Numbers of complaints of harassment and discrimination
- Staff attendance at equal opportunities training events
- Curriculum Audit data to include all curriculum areas
- Monitoring of development and delivery of the curriculum in the medium of Welsh

Creating Student/Employer Voice through Consultation

Consultation is carried out via perception surveys (internal and external) and the development of stronger links with the local community is conducted through Heads of School.

Publishing of the Policy

The EO policy will be available through the internet and intranet, e-student diary, College prospectuses. Hard copies are available at all reception point or upon request by any one individual. The induction programme for staff/learners will highlight the College's commitment to equality of opportunity. The College ensures that work placement providers are aware of and adhere to the College's EO policy. New applicants will have access to a copy of the policy under the recruitment and selection procedure at the application stage and in the staff induction process from the Personnel team.

Quality Assurance Review:

The Equal Opportunities working group will review this policy annually. Any recommendations for amendment, based on results of monitoring and consultations and in the light of any changes to legislation, will be reported to the Senior Management Team for further consideration.