



South Downs College

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

Responsible Senior Manager:	Debbie Smith Assistant Principal Student Services & Support
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EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 South Downs College is committed to providing and promoting equal opportunities in employment and learning and to avoiding unlawful discrimination. We believe that celebration of a diverse community of learning is an intrinsic element in achieving successful outcomes for our students and staff.
- 1.2 Compliance with this policy should ensure that employees do not commit unlawful acts of discrimination.
- 1.3 Striving to ensure that the college environment is free of harassment and bullying and that everyone is treated with dignity and respect is a key aspect of promoting equal opportunities at South Downs College.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to everyone who becomes or seeks to become a member of the South Downs College community whether as a member of staff (permanent or temporary), applicants, students, contractors, volunteers or other stakeholders. This policy applies to all college activities.
- 2.2 The College aims to eliminate discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, ethnic or national origin, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership or social class.

3. Purpose

- 3.1 The purpose of this policy is to make clear the expectations of South Downs College in promoting equality and celebrating diversity to ensure a consistently high quality and pro-active approach to fulfilling our responsibilities.
- 3.2 All staff and students are required to abide by this policy and actions and words that are contrary to either the word or the spirit of this policy will be robustly challenged through appropriate disciplinary measures.

4. Legal Requirements

- 4.1 This Equality and Diversity policy is based on the Equality Act 2010, which defines the protected characteristics as:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Race
- Religion and Belief
- Sexual Orientation
- Gender Reassignment
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Marriage & Civil Partnerships

Whilst all nine characteristics apply in the employment duties of the Act, the characteristic of marriage and civil partnerships is not included in the education duties of the Act. It is unlawful to either directly or indirectly discriminate against a person on these grounds.

4.2 Other aspects of a person's identity, background or circumstances can cause them to experience discrimination, for example a person's socio-economic status, class, background, appearance or alternative lifestyle. The College is committed to advancing equality and eliminating discrimination on these and other grounds.

4.3 The College has a Single Equality Scheme which is published on the College website and staff Intranet. The scheme outlines the College's aims and plans in terms of equality and diversity. Consultation with stakeholders has taken place to agree equality objectives and an action plan, which are incorporated into the scheme.

5. Marketing and Recruitment

5.1 College marketing and publicity material, recruitment and admission procedures will focus on the individual needs of students.

5.2 Marketing and publicity material will assure all types of applicant that they will be welcomed at the College. The College will identify courses where particular groups are under-represented and implement strategies to promote equality.

5.3 All advertising for staff vacancies will include a statement on the College's Equality and Diversity Policy. All recruitment procedures, promotions, transfers and training for staff will be carried out in strict accordance with current legislation.

6. The Curriculum and Learner Experience

6.1 The curriculum includes course content, learning and teaching methods, work experience and shadowing, and methods of review, assessment and evaluation. The College will provide a curriculum that offers all students an equal opportunity to achieve their academic potential and which ensures there is parity of esteem between all courses.

6.2 The curriculum of the College will promote positive images of all peoples, regardless of age, gender, ethnic group, class, sexual orientation, transgender, physical or cognitive ability or other personal circumstances. In every course and subject the resource materials presented to students will be monitored and reviewed so that they are free of discriminatory attitudes, images and language (unless they are to be analysed critically in the context of the pursuit of equal opportunities), and promote good relations between people from different groups.

6.3 Any user of the College's Information Technology facilities, including E-Mail and the Internet, who creates or communicates any data or images that could be deemed as offensive to other members of the College or is in contravention of the College's Prevent Duty will be subject to the College's disciplinary procedures.

6.4 The College will ensure that all students have equal opportunity to access pastoral and academic support, facilities, trips and visits.

7. Equal opportunities in employment

7.1 The organisation will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, and opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy.

7.2 Person and job specifications will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Candidates for employment or promotion will be assessed objectively against the requirements for the job, taking account of any reasonable adjustments that may be required for candidates with a disability. Disability and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions except in exceptional circumstances.

7.3 The organisation will consider any possible indirectly discriminatory effect of its standard working practices, including the number of hours to be worked, the times at which these are to be worked and the place at which work is to be done, when considering requests for variations to these standard working practices and will refuse such requests only if the organisation considers it has good reasons, unrelated to any protected characteristic, for doing so. The organisation will comply with its obligations in relation to statutory requests for contract variations. The organisation will also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability.

7.4 The organisation will monitor the ethnic, gender and age composition of the existing workforce and of applicants for jobs (including promotion), and the number of people with disabilities within these groups, and will consider and take any appropriate action to address any problems that may be identified as a result of the monitoring process.

8. Customers, suppliers and other people not employed by the organisation

8.1 The organisation will not discriminate unlawfully against customers using or seeking to use goods, facilities or services provided by the organisation.

8.2 Employees should report any bullying or harassment by customers, suppliers, visitors or others to their manager who will take appropriate action.

9. Training

9.1 The organisation will provide training in equal opportunities to managers and others likely to be involved in recruitment or other decision-making where equal opportunities issues are likely to arise.

9.2 The College will provide training to all existing and new employees and others engaged to work at the College. The College will provide additional training to managers to enable them to deal more effectively with complaints of bullying and harassment.

10. Responsibilities

10.1 The Governing Body designates the Principal as having overall responsibility for equality issues at South Downs College. The Assistant Principal supports the Principal overseeing the Equality and Diversity Forum which is chaired by the Head of Learner Services and meets termly.

10.2 Governors are responsible for ensuring that:

- A link Governor is appointed who works with the Senior Leadership Team and the Equality and Diversity Forum to champion Equality and Diversity
- They are aware of the Governing Body's statutory responsibilities in relation to equality legislation as an employer and service provider
- The membership of the Governing Body strives to reflect the diversity of the communities served by the College
- They respond to monitoring information on staff, students and applicants and agree a course of action

10.3 The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for ensuring that:

- They are aware of the College's statutory duties in relation to equality and diversity legislation
- All policies, procedures are equality impact analysed

- Procedures for challenging all forms of discrimination, harassment, victimisation and unacceptable behaviour are widely promoted
- The Equality and Diversity Forum effectively carries out its responsibilities
- A positive, inclusive ethos is created encouraging feedback
- Members of staff understand the significance of equality and diversity and know how to incorporate them into their work
- Progress is made on the Single Equality Scheme and action plan and Governors are informed and advised of progress via the Curriculum and Quality Committee

10.4 Managers and staff are responsible for ensuring that:

- They are aware of the College's statutory duties and policies and procedures are implemented with regard to equality and diversity issues
- They challenge inappropriate behaviour by students, staff, partner contractors, work placement providers and other contractors
- Student induction programmes and tutorial programmes reflect the College's commitment to promote equality of opportunity
- Curriculum activities actively embed equality and diversity issues
- Staff induction, continuous professional development and performance management reflect the College's commitment to equality of opportunity
- They participate in and promote appropriate equality and diversity training.
- They provide teaching, learning and assessment methods, support and resources that meet the individual needs of students
- They uphold and engage with the College policy on equality and diversity

10.5 Equality and Diversity Forum members are responsible for ensuring that:

- Equality and diversity objectives and the action plan in the Single Equality Scheme are implemented
- They encourage and support the development of policies, which seek to ensure the removal of prejudice and discrimination
- The content and operation of equal opportunities policies and schemes are monitored and reviewed on an annual basis
- Monitoring information is collected, analysed and published, and the action plan developed
- Appropriate training and development is provided to stakeholders to support the appreciation and understanding of equality and diversity issues

10.6 Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees or customers are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the College's disciplinary procedure. Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

11. Grievances

11.1 If you consider that you may have been unlawfully discriminated against, you may use the College's grievance procedure to make a complaint.

- 11.2 The College will take any complaint seriously and will seek to resolve any grievance that it upholds. You will not be penalised for raising a grievance, even if your grievance is not upheld, unless your complaint is both untrue and made in bad faith.
- 11.3 Use of the College's grievance procedure does not affect your right to make a complaint to an employment tribunal. Complaints to an employment tribunal must normally be made within three months beginning with the act of discrimination complained of.

12. Procedures

- 12.1 It is the responsibility of all members of the College community to ensure that the Equality and Diversity Policy is fully implemented, and that action is taken in instances of a breach of the Policy.
- 12.2 In order to further promote the Equality and Diversity Policy, the College will monitor student and staff recruitment, the curriculum, assessment procedures and student achievement, and take appropriate action to address any issues arising. Monitoring reports will be regularly considered by the Equality and Diversity Forum which will meet once every term and convene exceptional meetings if required.
- 12.3 All allegations of a breach of the Equality and Diversity Policy must be reported to a member of staff. Students may report an allegation to any member of staff, including their tutor, Head of Learner Services, Vice Principal, Assistant Principal Student Services or a Student Advisor. Staff should report allegations to their Learning Manager or Director of Curriculum, line manager, Principal, Assistant Principal HR and Organisational Development or Assistant Principal Student Services.
- 12.4 The appropriate member of the Senior Leadership Team must be informed of all allegations/incidents. In all cases, the appropriate member of the Senior Leadership Team will investigate the allegation to ascertain the facts and will attempt to resolve minor issues through reconciliation including verbal or written apology to the victim. A written record of the incident/allegation will be kept.
- 12.5 Where it appears to the appropriate member of SLT that there has been a serious breach of the Equality and Diversity Policy or where a minor issue is unresolved, the matter must be referred to the Principal/Assistant Principal Student Services, who will consider appropriate action under the student disciplinary procedure, the staff disciplinary procedure and if appropriate refer the matter to the police.
- 12.6 In carrying through these guidelines, all staff and students must take great care to ensure that they deal with the effects the incidents have on all those concerned; that they provide support to those wronged; and all those wronged are not disadvantaged.

13. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored periodically by the College to judge its effectiveness and will be updated in accordance with changes in the law. In particular, the College will monitor the ethnic and gender composition of the existing workforce and of applicants for jobs (including promotion), and the number of people with disabilities within these groups, and will review its equal opportunities policy in accordance with the results shown by the monitoring. If changes are required, the College will implement them.

Information provided by job applicants and employees for monitoring purposes will be used only for these purposes and will be dealt with in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.