



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

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1. Summary and Purpose

This document outlines our policy and commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion for everyone within our college community including employees, students, contractors and visitors. This document also includes information on how we put this policy into practice and how members of the college community are responsible for helping to make this happen.

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy is part of our legal obligation to the public sector equality duty as outlined in the Equality Act (2010).

This document also includes how we try to provide equality of opportunity for employees, students contractors and visitors; information on support available to our college community and a summary of the definitions of types of discrimination as set out in the Equality Act (2010)

2. Definitions

Harassment	A form of discrimination. Harassment is often unwanted behaviour based on someone’s protected characteristic, sexual harassment or treating someone less favourably because they reject or submit to sexual harassment. Harassment can also happen without discriminatory motives.
Unwanted Behaviours	Behaviour which intends to, or has created the effect of, violating someone’s dignity by creating a hostile, intimidating, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.
Bullying	Often identified as intimidating, malicious, offensive or insulting behaviour by one or more individuals. It may involve words, physical actions or general conduct. It can also include abuse or misuse of power. What one person may consider as bullying may be viewed as no more than firm management by another. However, any behaviour that leads to someone becoming stressed, demotivated or frightened is unacceptable.
Victimisation	Less favourable treatment of someone because they have made, or have helped someone else make, a complaint of bullying and/or harassment.
Protected Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to the Equality Act (2010), it is against the law to discriminate against someone because of their age, disability, gender identity (a personal sense of one's own gender. This can correspond to or differ from the sex we are assigned at birth), marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity (whether or not you are pregnant or have given birth recently), race (includes: race, colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins), religion or belief including philosophical belief and a lack of belief, sex or sexual orientation.

3. Policy

3.1 – Policy Statement

This policy sets out our commitment, including the commitment of our Board of Governors, to ensure equality of opportunity and work to prevent any unlawful or unfair discrimination and harassment at Hereford College of Arts. It applies to all our staff, students, contractors and visitors.

We are committed to the principles of equal opportunities and respect for individuals in creating and maintaining an inclusive environment. We value and celebrate diversity, seeing this as critical to achieving our strategic aims and long-term success. We work to recruit and develop employees and students from a wide range of backgrounds and promote an inclusive culture where:

- A supportive and inclusive learning, working and social environment is fostered to ensure that everyone feels that they are valued and can work to achieve their potential;
- Opportunities are open to everyone, and decisions are based on merit and are free from bias. However, opportunities need to be considered based on content and criteria before opening it up to everyone. For example, some job opportunities will be based on a set of specific skills or a student brief will be based on a specific course or set of requirements based on a skills learnt on that course. Opportunities will be reviewed on a case by case basis to evaluate eligibility.
- All of our employees, staff, contractors and visitors are treated with dignity and respect,
- Everyone within our college community feel free to be themselves

We are committed to providing equality for everyone, regardless of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender identity (a personal sense of one's own gender. This can correspond to or differ from the sex we are assigned at birth)
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity (whether or not you are pregnant or have given birth recently).
- Race (includes: race, colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins)
- Religion or belief including philosophical belief and a lack of belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

These are defined in the Equality Act (2010) as 'protected characteristics'. To support our equality, policies, schemes and action plans, which support and form part of this overall policy.

3.2 – Responsibilities

As a college we:

- Have a zero-tolerance approach to all incidents of abuse, harm and hate. Any incidents will be addressed and handled as part of our disciplinary code.

- Value diversity and promote equal opportunities for everyone;
- Promote respect and encourage good relations within and between groups;
- Aim to meet the different needs of different groups, while promoting shared values;
- Promote an inclusive and harmonious place of work and study where people respect others and where harassment and bullying, intimidation and violence are not tolerated
- Prevent unlawful discrimination and victimisation
- Meet our legal obligations; and
- Take seriously and deal with situations where anyone has broken this policy.

The Board of Governors has ultimate responsibility for making sure this policy is followed in full. Each manager will deliver the equality commitments in their areas of responsibility.

On a day-to-day basis, the senior leadership team will work to put this policy into practice and ensure that the college meets its yearly reporting responsibilities under the public sector equality duty, as well as making sure that we regularly review this policy and update it as necessary to reflect UK equality law.

We expect all of our staff, students, contractors and visitors to keep to this policy and the associated policies referred to within it. We expect every member of our college community to promote a culture which is free from illegal discrimination and all forms of harassment and bullying. Failure to meet these responsibilities may lead to civil action or criminal proceedings against an individual or an institution (or both).

As part of the college's zero tolerance, we will act on every report of harassment, discrimination, bullying or behaviours that threaten to undermine someone's dignity, in the swiftest way possible. Should evidence be found that such an act has occurred, the college will take immediate appropriate action.

3.3 – Committees

The college's Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Board of Governors ensures that the college is meeting its targets under the colleges Access & Participation Plan (APP) and ensure the concerns of staff, students, contractors and visitors are reflected in colleges policy and practice.

3.4 – Implementation

To ensure the college meets its obligations under the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, the college will:

- Ensure that staff, students, contractors and visitors are aware of our equality, diversity and inclusion policy and related policies which are available on our website (<https://www.hca.ac.uk/about-us/governance-and-policy/our-policies>)
- Monitor and report on progress against the college's Access & Participation Plan
- Consider equality, diversity and inclusion, in all policies, strategies and procedures to make sure that they promote equality and do not unlawfully discriminate;
- Ensure that our staff, students, visitors and contractors are provided with appropriate forums to discuss equality, diversity and inclusion issues and raise any concerns (this could be via committees, staff networks or trade unions)
- Have procedures in place to support the fair appointment, promotion and development of staff
- Ensure our Access and Participation Plan (APP) reflects fair selection, teaching and assessment of students;
- Provide managers and employees with appropriate equality, diversity and inclusion training

- Provide information on our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion in our job descriptions and student handbooks
- Ask for commitments from our suppliers and partners to make sure that they take steps to promote equality, diversity and inclusion and prevent discrimination; and
- Make sure there are suitable resources in place to enforce this policy effectively.

3.5 – College Access & Participation Plan (APP) AND Self-Assessment Report (SAR)

The college's APP sets out the equality objectives that we are working to meet in line with our public sector equality duty. We report our progress on these objectives each year through an APP Report.

The college's SAR highlights challenges and opportunities at college-level (FE) in the context of equality, diversity and inclusion.

Progress against the equality objectives is also monitored by the college's SLT and Board of Governors.

The college's APP is reviewed annually and refreshed as necessary to meet changes in equality legislation and sector best practice.

4. Reports of discrimination

4.1 – Staff and contractors

If you are a member of staff or a contractor working on behalf of the college and believe that you have suffered any type of discrimination or harassment by a member of our college community, then we take this incredibly seriously and we ask that you report this straight away. You can report this by contacting personnel at personnel@hca.ac.uk

4.2 – Students

If you believe that you have suffered any type of discrimination or harassment by a member of our college community, then we take this incredibly seriously and we ask that you report this straight away. You can report this to complaints@hca.ac.uk

4.3 – Visitors/applicants/members of the public

If you are a visitor or a member of the public and believe you have suffered a type of discrimination or harassment then please email personnel@hca.ac.uk with full details of the incident so we can investigate further.

4.4 – Hate crimes and hate incidents

An incident of bullying and/or harassment may constitute a hate crime or hate incident. The term 'hate crime' can be used to describe a range of criminal behaviours where the alleged perpetrator is motivated by hostility or demonstrates hostility towards the alleged victim's disability, race, religion, sexual orientation or transgender status.

There are trained third-party hate crime reporters at the college. Please report any crime or incident to complaints@hca.ac.uk You can also report a hate crime or hate incident via West Mercia Police.

4.5 – Violence/aggression

Violence/aggression can be defined as any incident, in which a student or an employee is abused, threatened or assaulted by a staff member, student or visitor in any circumstance.

The college never tolerates violence/aggression and any incident should be reported to complaintsadvise@hca.ac.uk

5. Language and Terminology

5.1 – Adopted definitions

We recognise that prejudice and discrimination may arise and be reinforced by our use of language, which may not be neutral and free from personal bias. Words and phrases can be associated with negative attitudes and may unintentionally offend people, including members of groups that face prejudice, harassment or discrimination.

We expect every member of our college community to ensure that they do not use language that may cause offence to others. This includes when writing or speaking and in material that is published or sent by email or on social media.

Rather than tell people what language they can and can't use, we ask staff, students, contractors and visitors to be mindful of the language they use.

5.2 – Social media

The use of social media is common for staff, students, contractors and visitors and we recognise that the material that appears on it can have a significant effect on people. Regardless of intent or the setting in which it occurs, hate speech and abusive language is not tolerated and individuals could be liable for disciplinary action under our disciplinary policy.

5.3 – Academic Freedom

Academic freedom is protected by law and the college encourages genuine academic debate within education. However, in line with the Equality Act (2010), and the college's safeguarding policy individuals are not protected by academic freedom if engaging in abusive or hateful behaviour. This includes inciting violence or hatred in online spaces or attacking protected groups online or in person.

Should such behaviours be found to occur, the college will act in line with our disciplinary policy. This should not stifle genuine academic debate in genuine academic settings or publications.

6. Advertising and Information

Our advertisements and publications for employee and student recruitment will state our commitment to equality and diversity. We will work to make sure that the language and images used in all publications and written and electronic material is inclusive and does not discriminate.

We will clearly show the entry requirements for courses in our student prospectus and outline facilities available to students. Any other details we send out to applicants will support our equality, diversity and inclusion policy.

We will share information about job opportunities throughout the college and we will also advertise them outside the college unless there is a justifiable reason not to.