

## Equality & Diversity Policy

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External reference points	UK Quality Code UKSCQA/02	
Linked policies	Advice and guidance on Enabling Student Achievement (4.5 <i>Equality of opportunity for all students to develop academic and professional skills.</i>	
	Sustainable Development Goals (2015): 4 Quality Education, 5 Gender Equality, 10 Reduced Inequalities	
Linked Acts	Complaints Policy Non-Academic Disciplinary Policy Admissions Policy Safeguarding & Prevent Policy Staff Development Policy (EH)	Academic Misconduct Policy Employee Handbook Disability Policy Corporate Social Responsibility
Audience	OBC Staff, students and Website (General Public)	

## Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Purpose .....	3
3. Aims and Objectives .....	3
4. Scope.....	4
5. Policy Statement.....	4
6. Recruitment.....	5
7. Monitoring & Enhancement .....	6
8. Responsibilities.....	8
9. Communication & Training.....	9
10. Review & Monitoring of Policy .....	9

## **1. Introduction**

The College is committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all students and staff, irrespective of race, gender, disability, religion or socio-economic background. The College ensures there is an environment that is free from discrimination, violence, harassment & bullying, offering dignity and respect for everyone.

The College values the diversity of our learning community and is committed to promoting equality of opportunities for all. Our vision identifies the College as a provider of inspiring, distinctive and excellent adult learning, a college, which contributes to, and is responsive to, the communities it serves.

Respect for diversity and the promotion of equality is central to our mission as we strive to provide relevant and challenging education and training for all sections of the community, and to be an exemplary employer with a diverse workforce that is equipped with the skills necessary to achieve our shared ambitions.

## **2. Purpose**

The purpose of the Equality and Diversity Policy is to set out the College's commitment to an inclusive and supportive environment for students, staff, contractors and visitors that is free from discrimination. It explains how we intend to respond to the Equality Act (2010), by continuing to show due regard to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations for all our stakeholders.

## **3. Aims and Objectives**

This policy aims to inform stakeholders, clearly and simply, about the College's objectives and responsibilities for furthering and promoting Equality and Diversity at the College over the next three years. The objectives include the following:

- to actively prevent discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other abusive conduct

- to ensure that students and staff are able to thrive in an environment which welcomes and supports them
- to ensure everyone is able to make the best of their strengths and overcome challenges with equal opportunities for growth and development
- to strive towards best practice in our approach to Equality and Diversity across all the College's functions.
- to work towards achieving corporate social responsibility objectives in support of sustainable development Goals 4 Quality Education, 5 Gender Equality and 10 Reduced Inequalities

#### **4. Scope**

This policy applies to all the College's stakeholders, including staff (full-time, part-time or sessional staff), students, volunteers and governors. This policy demonstrates our commitment to go beyond compliance with equality legislation.

#### **5. Policy Statement**

This Equality and Diversity Policy will focus on having due regard to elimination of discrimination, and applies to all the protected characteristics, namely:

- Age
- Gender & gender reassignment
- Marriage & civil partnership
- Pregnancy & maternity
- Race
- Religion & belief
- Sex

- Sexual orientation
- Disability

Having due regard means conscious awareness and compliance with the aims and five main objectives of this policy as part of the College's decision-making process. The College will gather metrics on equality that include demographic data, stakeholder feedback and student achievement rates to ensure College functions are analysed in correlation with stakeholder profiles and curriculum areas. This activity will be managed and monitored by the **Equality and Diversity Committee** who reports to the Senior Management Team (SMT).

Having due regard to the prevention of discrimination at Oxford Business College is not a matter of box ticking. The College affirms its intention to act on its responsibilities concerning discrimination in substance, with rigour and an open mind in such a way that it influences decision making at all levels. This includes ensuring that all staff are thoroughly trained in aspects of equality and diversity and are equipped to ensure that we are delivering on our objectives.

Having due regard to advancing equality of opportunity will include, for example, the College taking action to continue monitoring and eliminating achievement gaps through close review of enrolment practice, teaching and learning. Senior Managers will be held to account for reducing any achievement gaps that are identified through college provision.

Having due regard to the need to foster good relations will include, for example, ensuring that teachers embed the promotion of equality and diversity themes confidently and successfully in lessons, challenge stereotypes and ensure that all students are fully equipped to live and work in a contemporary and diverse setting.

## **6. Recruitment of Students & Staff**

The College will seek to ensure that all job applicants and staff are treated fairly, with respect and without bias. No applicant or member of staff will be approached less favourably than another because of his or her age, disability, ethnic origin, gender, marital status, caring or parental responsibilities, religious or philosophical beliefs.

All staff members who are involved in short-listing or interviewing job applicants, or involved in other selection processes, should be aware of the College's policies on equality and diversity and will have undertaken recruitment and selection training.

All students and staff are responsible for ensuring that they act in accordance with this policy during their everyday work or study, ensuring that everyone can expect dignity and respect, without discrimination at all times.

Abusive language or behaviour will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation's Non-Academic Disciplinary Policy and Procedures for students and in Staff Disciplinary Procedures set out in the Staff Handbook. Particularly serious abuse could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 - which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.

Students with declared disabilities will be invited to discuss additional support that the College can provide.

Decisions affecting staff conditions will be based solely on job-related ability and merit. Decisions affecting student learning will be considered by the Academic Board in relation to the student's programme of study. Staff with declared disabilities will have the opportunity to discuss reasonable adjustments during the recruitment process.

## **7. Monitoring & Enhancement**

The College will employ a variety of means to achieve its aims under this Policy and to pursue excellence in meeting its responsibilities and objectives. There are three ways the College will do this:

### **Data collection**

Data will be gathered annually according to the following (not exhaustive) list:

#### ***Student Data***

- Student enrolment
- Achievement, retention and success rates
- Applications
- Admissions/offer letters

- Conversion rates from applications to admissions to enrolment
- Cancellation/withdrawal rates
- Access to student services
- Access to student enrichment activities
- Disciplinary action, complaints and incidents of harassment/bullying

### ***Employee Data***

- Employee numbers
- Grade and category of staff including full and part-time status
- Applications for appointment
- Shortlisted candidates
- Appointments and promotions
- Type of contract (permanent, fixed term)
- Employee relations; grievance, disciplinary, harassment, capability, complaints
- Leavers
- Training and staff development opportunities
- Requests for flexible working
- Return rates from maternity leave and the roles to which staff return
- Pay levels
- Profile of those with dependants and caring responsibilities
- Staff attendance at Continuing Professional Development (CPD), especially CPD related to Equality and Diversity.

Collected data will be used to inform and influence management decisions and the review of policies and practices within the College, and the strategic and business planning processes. It will also be reported upon within the quality assurance processes to the Senior Management Team (SMT).

The above data will be analysed and presented to the Board of Governors and SMT as part of the periodic curriculum and service level reviews. These will form the basis of ongoing termly Development Plans and captured for the whole college in the overall annual Development Plan.

In addition to regular monitoring and evaluation processes, the College will carry out monitoring whenever necessary, for example as the result of an issue that may have been raised. This will ensure that the College is able to promote greater equality and diversity in all aspects of College provision, which include but is not limited to learning, teaching and assessment; management and governance; admissions, access and participation; behaviour and discipline; staff recruitment and training.

## **8. Responsibilities**

The Senior Management Team (SMT) is responsible for the review and implementation of this policy. The SMT is responsible for creating a respectful College environment and an inclusive culture which genuinely supports people's differences and values diverse contributions. They are also tasked with upholding the highest standards of personal behaviour and conduct; leading by example and for the setting and enforcing of standards in the College. In so doing, they will provide an atmosphere where staff and students feel free to declare their personal characteristics.

### **Staff**

Staff are responsible for ensuring that they are familiar with the Equality Act 2010 and are expected to participate in training, briefing, awareness-raising sessions, and to report any instance of discrimination or unfair treatment to their line manager.

Staff are expected to behave in accordance with this policy and the College's core values. Staff should respect and value the rights of colleagues and students to keep sensitive personal information private and should not disclose such information without the express permission of the person concerned. See the College Privacy Notice and Consent Policy.

For any concerns under the Prevent guidance (Safeguarding and Prevent Policy), staff must follow the Channel process.

### **Students**



Students are responsible for ensuring that they are familiar with the Equality and Diversity Policy and to report any instance of discrimination or unfair treatment to a Student Welfare Officer, their Tutor or any Senior Manager if they prefer.

Students are expected to behave in accordance with this policy and the College's core values.

Students should respect and value the rights of colleagues and other students to keep sensitive personal information private and should not disclose such information without the express permission of the person concerned, except where concerns relating to Prevent are raised.

The College has identified a 'responsibility matrix' for ensuring that equality and diversity are promoted throughout the organisation, with key staff having designated responsibilities including the following:

- The Managing Director Dr Padmesh Gupta: 01865791908 [director@oxfordbusinesscollege.ac.uk](mailto:director@oxfordbusinesscollege.ac.uk) provides overall leadership of Equality and Diversity in the College
- HR Manager, responsible for leading on the Equality and Diversity Development Plan

## **9. Communication & Training**

All staff within the College will discuss this updated policy at team meetings. This policy will also be discussed by the Academic Board. If further training on its contents is needed, this will be arranged by the Human Resources Manager so that all staff are fully aware of this policy and their responsibilities.

## **10. Review & Monitoring of Policy**

The Managing Director, through the Equality and Diversity Coordinator and with the support of the Senior Management Team (SMT), will review and monitor the policy and procedures within three years and recommend and implement approved changes where necessary. A revised version of the policy will be submitted to the Board of Governors (BoG) within three years, or when required, to ensure that any identified deficiencies or weaknesses have been dealt with without delay.