



Ruskin College Oxford

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

Created: April 2016

Approved: Governing Executive, Joint Agreement between
Ruskin College, UCU and Unison

Last Reviewed: January 2020

Responsibility for Review: HR and Governing Executive

Date of Next Review: January 2023

Equality and Diversity Policy

1.0 Policy

- 1.1** Ruskin College is committed to eliminating discrimination and creating an inclusive culture based on merit where everyone - students and staff - has an equal chance to succeed. We recognise that by attracting hard to reach students, and a diverse range of people with different life experiences and perspectives, we can generate greater creativity in anticipating the needs and wishes of staff and students and other customers. The College is committed to promoting equality and providing an environment where all members of its community are treated with respect and dignity.
- 1.2** The purpose of the Equality and Diversity policy is to ensure we provide equality and fairness for all our staff and students and to demonstrate our commitment not to discriminate in any area of our employment practices and teaching learning and assessment practices as they relate to the “protected characteristic” whether directly or indirectly. The “protected characteristics” include age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, national origin, religion or belief, sex sexual orientation and socio-economic background.
- 1.3** The Policy incorporates all the relevant employment and equality legislation, is underpinned by the College’s Core Values and applies to all current and prospective staff and students.

2.0 Principles

- 2.1** Every member of staff and every student is entitled to work in an environment that promotes dignity and respect for all. The College will not tolerate any form of intimidation, bullying or harassment whether direct or indirect. Nor will the College tolerate any form of victimisation or other forms of unacceptable behaviour.
- 2.2** The College will seek to reflect the diverse local community in and around Oxford, ensuring it delivers its core values and mission statement in respect to staff and students.
- 2.3** Staff development and promotion opportunities are available to all staff, with mandatory updates underpinning our Equality and Diversity Policy. Students are supported within the curriculum offer to promote equality and diversity.
- 2.4** Decisions affecting staff conditions will be based solely on the job related ability and merit. Decisions affecting student learning will be considered by the relevant teaching staff in relation to the student’s programme of study.

2.5 Reasonable adjustments will be made to the working and learning environment to enable staff and students equality of opportunities and to ensure that it complies with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) to enable access to education for all.

2.6 Any breaches of this policy may potentially lead to disciplinary proceedings.

2.7 An impact assessment will be carried out against the “protected characteristics” to ensure that the College fulfils the duties outlined within this policy where there is a significant change to work and/or teaching and learning practices.. This policy will be monitored and reviewed regularly and an Action Plan developed to address any areas of weakness.

3.0 Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The **Governing Executive, Principal and Head of Higher Education** are tasked with the responsibility of creating a respectful college environment and an inclusive culture which genuinely supports people’s differences and values diverse contributions. The Governing Executive, Principal and Head of Higher Education are tasked with upholding the highest standard of personal behaviour and conduct by 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.

3.2 **Academic and Programme Co-ordinators** are responsible for promoting a positive work environment that respects and values all people, in addition to ensuring staff are trained to understand, respect, value and apply equality and diversity. Academic and Programme Co-ordinators are responsible for applying the College’s policies, practices and procedures fairly and consistently, highlighting and addressing any practices which appear to be discriminatory. Planning work should take into account the access requirements of different groups of people including reasonable adjustments, caring responsibilities and cultural differences.

3.3 **Staff** are responsible for ensuring that they are familiar with the Equality and Diversity policies, and the “protected characteristics”, in so doing ensure that acts or omissions do not impact on others in this group. Staff 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.**

3.4 **Students** are responsible for ensuring that they are familiar with the Equality and Diversity Policy, and the “protected characteristics”, and in so doing ensure that acts or omissions do not impact on others in this group. Students are expected to participate in training, briefing, awareness-raising sessions, and to report any instance of discrimination or unfair treatment to their tutor/personal tutor. 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 students to keep sensitive personal information private and should not disclose such information without the express permission of the person concerned.**

3.5 **Human Resources** will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy

and action plans to promote equality and diversity, as they relate to employment, promotion, training, policy, practice, guidance and procedure in conjunction with the appropriate leads in the respective area.

4.0 Definitions

4.1 Equality refers primarily to statutory compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and the actions the College takes through its policies and procedures to prevent direct and indirect discrimination.

4.2 Direct Discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have, are thought to have or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic.

4.3 Indirect Discrimination occurs when a condition, rule, policy or practice applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share protected characteristics. However, if the rule can be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim it may not amount to indirect discrimination.

4.4 Discrimination by Association this direct discrimination occurs when someone is associated with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.

4.5 Discrimination by perception this direct discrimination occurs because someone thinks they possess a particular protected characteristic.

4.6 Victimisation occurs when someone is treated less favourably because of making or supporting a complaint about discrimination.

4.7 Diversity refers to the variety of differences between people in an organisation; differences include visible and non-visible factors such as background, culture, personality, work style, size, accent, language and so on. The College recognises that one size does not fit all in planning and interaction with staff and students. The activities and actions of the College in promoting a diverse staff community, reflective of the local community, the city and the students, take this into consideration.

5.0 Equality Monitoring

5.1 Ruskin will encourage all staff and prospective staff and students to provide personal information so that the College is able to monitor the composition of the College and the impact policies have on those staff and students with protected characteristics. Human Resources will produce an annual equality report in April of each year as it relates to staff, whilst students' statistical data will be produced by the Academic Registrar.

6.0 Protected Characteristics

6.1 Age – Ruskin will aim to promote age diversity by challenging age stereotyping; valuing the benefits of a mixed age workforce and student population; considering the language used and considering how work and study programmes can meet the needs of staff and students.

- 6.2 **Disability** – Ruskin will focus on ability and as far as reasonably possible will consider flexible arrangements within its policies and procedures, to challenge stereotyping; provide information in flexible formats; anticipate and plan events, presentation and training to allow inclusivity and accessibility and provide opportunities for advancement.
- 6.3 **Gender** – Ruskin will promote gender equality. Some examples may include balanced presentation of gender in materials, positions within the College, pay, study programmes, home and work life balance, support for employees who become pregnant or adopt a child/children and arrangements for students with childcare needs.
- 6.4 **Marital Status** – Ruskin will not treat someone less favourably because they are or are assumed to be single, married, in a civil partnership, divorce, widowed, separated or in a different relationship. For example employment benefits will be available to staff irrespective of their marital status, work activities will not be assigned unfairly, and students study programmes will be available to all irrespective of marital status.
- 6.5 **Race** – Ruskin will promote equality and diversity, and will for example challenge behaviour/treatment which does not value race, colour, and nationality, ethnic or national origin. It will also provide equality and diversity awareness training for staff, and reflect diversity in both the student and the staff population.
- 6.5 **Religious Belief** (Lack of religious belief) – Ruskin recognises an individual's freedom of belief and right to protection from intolerance and persecution. All staff and students will therefore be treated fairly irrespective of their religious belief in accordance with the Values of Ruskin College. Ruskin will raise awareness of cultural issues, and be prepared to accept and wherever possible accommodate different cultural customs and beliefs.
- 6.6 **Sexuality** – Ruskin respects different lifestyles of staff and students and will challenge negative stereotypical views in respects to staff or students actual or perceived orientation i.e. same sex (gay/lesbian), opposite sex (heterosexual), same and opposite sex (bisexual).
- 6.7 **Transgender Status** – Ruskin acknowledges the potential barriers which staff and students may encounter as a result of their transgender status. As a result, Ruskin will take positive steps to support staff that plan to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone gender re-assignment and ensure that they are treated with dignity and respect. Working with Human Resources and/or with appropriate advice, Ruskin will develop a supportive plan for staff and in the care of a student, work with an identified linked tutor will provide the necessary support required.