



Equality and Diversity Policy

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PROUD – Equality and Diversity at South Essex College

Equality and Diversity Policy

In line with its PROUD values of Partnership, Respect, Outstanding, United and Dynamic, South Essex College is committed to the advancement, promotion and celebration of equality and diversity for all learners, employees and other users of the College.

- Partnership** South Essex College values the views and ideas of all of its Stakeholders and will work in partnership to create and maintain conditions where learners and staff are treated solely on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential.
- Respect** At South Essex College all individuals are treated with respect and courtesy irrespective of protected characteristics of Age, Disability, Sex, Sexual Orientation, Race or Ethnicity, Religion or Belief, Gender re-assignment, Pregnancy or Maternity, Marriage and Civil Partnership or Socio-economic status and each contribution to the learning process is valued.
- Outstanding** South Essex College aims to be “The first choice for achieving success through quality learning”. We want all of our students, irrespective of ability or protected characteristic, to achieve above and beyond their expectations and experience motivational learning which will shape and change their lives, making us the first-choice organisation in the region.
- United** To be united in what we do, why we do it and how we achieve it.
- Dynamic** South Essex College will be dynamic in challenging discrimination (direct and indirect), victimisation and prejudice through a zero tolerance approach. The college will also be dynamic in advancing Equality and Diversity across all of its college centres within the curriculum, through embedding Equality and Diversity within its curriculum offer, through an annual programme of events and by celebrating student achievement within and outside of the classroom.

Policy Statement

The Equality and Diversity Policy adheres to required legislation and is supported by a wide variety of College policies and procedures. The Policy actively promotes a culture of celebrating diversity and will provide the framework to both monitor and analyse its performance in advancing equality and diversity.

South Essex College publishes an annual report based on the findings of its analysis and monitoring processes as well as the delivery and advancement of equality and diversity for its learners, employees and the local community.

The Equality and Diversity Policy is reviewed annually and amended along with associated documentation in the light of further legislation and other requirements.

Equality and Diversity Policy

Aim and Scope

South Essex College is committed to the advancement and promotion of equality and diversity for all learners, employees, and all other users of the College. Our ethos is to create and maintain conditions whereby learners and staff are treated solely on their own merits, abilities and potential, regardless of age, disability, race, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage or civil partnership.

The College will ensure that this commitment applies to all areas of its provision including its collaborative partners who deliver learning on behalf of the College, and in its procurement processes.

The College will advance its equality and diversity agenda with other partners, and organisations working with us either via tender or provision of goods and services, so that appropriate legislation is fully complied with and effectively met.

The College actively promotes a culture of celebrating diversity and will take all reasonable steps to prevent discrimination occurring. This includes promoting the significance of the Policy and what is expected of learners, employees and all other users of the College whilst they study or work at the College.

Relevant Legislation

The Equality Act 2010 introduces the new Public Sector Equality Duty for the nine protected characteristics mentioned above. The Public Sector Equality Duty replaced existing race/disability and gender equality duties.

The College will have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, victimisation and prejudice against people because of any one or combination of protected characteristics.

Policy General:

The College will:

1. Ensure the requirements of relevant legislation related to age, disability, race, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership are fully complied with.
2. Actively advance a culture of celebrating diversity and will maintain an inclusive learning environment of mutual tolerance for all. This includes raising the awareness of what is expected of learners, employees and users of the College whilst they study or work at the College and also provides the opportunity for learners to discuss issues and concerns if they feel that their expectations are not being fully met. Direct and/or indirect discrimination will not be tolerated.
3. Give due regard to all aspects of the legislation when making decisions of a strategic nature about the exercise of functions or making changes to functions or provision across the College to reduce any inequalities or disadvantage whether known or perceived where possible.
4. Implement effective policies and procedures throughout the College for dealing with harassment, bullying and victimisation of all learners and staff. The complaints and disciplinary procedures, grievance policy and procedure incorporating bullying and harassment will be used to effectively manage monitor all incidents. This includes monitoring the nature of complaints and disciplinary issues and the learners, employees and users of the College directly involved in the process.
5. Implement effective processes for monitoring and equality analysis in relation to the nine strands comprising age, disability, race, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity or marriage and civil partnership.
6. Annually publish an Equality and Diversity report on the findings of its monitoring processes and equality analysis, its advancement of equality and diversity through its work with staff and the delivery of learning informed with appropriate statistics on staff and learners. This report will be available in hardcopy and on the College's intranet and website, and in a variety of other formats on request, for all staff, partner organisations and potential and actual learners. The report is prepared and shared with SLT, SMT and Governors of the College for their consideration and approval.
7. Continue to embed the process of assessing the impact of its curriculum, its policies, processes, plans and procedures in order that no individual or group possessing protected characteristic/s, is disadvantaged, discriminated against, victimised or subject to prejudice.
8. Annually develop an Equality and Diversity Action Plan based on the equality analysis and regularly monitor it through the Equality and Diversity Committee. The action plan will be 'rag rated' to demonstrate progress made. Reports on progress made are provided to SLT, SMT and Governors.

9. Annually review the Equality and Diversity Policy and amend along with associated documentation in the light of further legislation and other requirements.

Glossary of terms

Term	Description / Explanation
Age	This refers to a person belonging to a particular age group, which can mean people of the same age (e.g. 32 year olds) or range of ages (e.g. 18 – 30 year olds, or people over 50).
Bullying	Bullying is a form of harassment and is usually considered to be a series of acts that occur over a period of time. It is persistent behaviour directed at an individual which may be offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting, and abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate or injure the recipient.
Combined discrimination	Less favourable treatment of a person compared with another person because of a combination of two or more protected characteristics.
Disability	A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
Disadvantage	A detriment or impediment – something that the individual affected might reasonably consider changes their position for the worse.
Discriminating Directly or indirectly	Direct: Refers to discrimination because of a person's protected characteristic; or Indirect: discrimination that occurs when a provision, criteria or practice is applied that creates disproportionate disadvantage for a person with a protected characteristic as compared to those who do not share that characteristic..
Harassment	Where a person engages in unwanted conduct relating to a protected characteristic and, the conduct has the purpose or effect of violating another individual's dignity, or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for another individual.
Impairment	A functional limitation which may lead to a person being defined as disabled according to the definition under the Equality Act. See disability.
Less Favourably	Worse, not as well as.
Marriage and civil partnership	Marriage is defined as a 'union between a man and a woman'. Same sex couples who marry or register as civil partners have the same rights as other married couples. Additionally, married transgender men and women are able to change their legal gender without having to end their marriage. Civil partners have the right to equal treatment with married couples in relation to all employment matters, policies and benefits and must be treated no less favourably.

Term	Description / Explanation
Monitoring	Monitoring for equality data to check if people with protected characteristics are participating and being treated equally. For example, monitoring the representation of women, or disabled people, in the workforce or at senior levels within organisations.
More favourably	To treat somebody better than someone else. This is unlawful under the Equality Act if it is because of a protected characteristic except in very limited circumstances e.g. the duty to make reasonable adjustments for a disabled person. The law can require pregnant workers to be treated more favourably in some circumstances.
Perception	In the Equality Act, the belief that someone has a protected characteristic, whether or not they do have it.
Physical barriers	A physical feature of a building or premises which places disabled people at a substantial disadvantage compared to non-disabled people when accessing goods, facilities and services or employment.
Positive action	Refers to a range of lawful actions that seek to overcome or minimise disadvantages (e.g. in employment opportunities) that people who share a protected characteristic have experienced, or to meet their different needs.
Positive discrimination	Treating someone with a protected characteristic more favourably to counteract the effects of past discrimination. It is generally not lawful although the duty to make reasonable adjustments is an exception where treating a disabled person more favourably may be required by law.
Pregnancy and maternity	Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.
Prejudice	Preconceived, usually unfavourable, judgments toward people or a person because of a protected or other personal characteristic (e.g. social class, political opinion).
Procurement	Is the term used in relation to the range of goods and services a public body or authority requires and delivers. It includes sourcing and appointment of a service provider and the subsequent management of the goods and services being provided.
Protected characteristics	These are the grounds upon which discrimination is unlawful. The characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
Public sector equality duty	The duty on a public authority or institution when carrying out its functions to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment, foster good relations and advance equality of opportunity and annually report on relevant data and information.

Term	Description / Explanation
Race	Refers to the protected characteristic of race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.
Religion or belief	Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.
Sex	This is a protected characteristic. It refers to whether a person is a man or a woman (of any age).
Sexual harassment	Any conduct of a sexual nature that is unwanted by the recipient, including verbal, non-verbal and physical behaviours, and which violates the victim's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment for them.
Sexual orientation	Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.
Stakeholders	People with an interest in a subject or issue who are likely to be affected by any decision relating to it and/or have responsibilities relating to it.
Transsexual person	Refers to a person who has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment. This may be a woman who has transitioned or is transitioning to be a man, or a man who has transitioned or is transitioning to be a woman. The law does not require a person to undergo a medical procedure to be recognised as a transsexual.
Unlawful	Not permitted by law (as distinct from illegal which means 'forbidden by law'). On occasions, unlawful and illegal may be synonymous, but unlawful is more correctly applied in relation to civil (as opposed to criminal) wrongs
Unreasonable	Not reasonable, beyond what's practicable.
Victimisation	Subjecting a person to a detriment because they have done a protected act or there is a belief that they have done a protected act i.e. bringing proceedings under the Equality Act; giving evidence or information in connection with proceedings under the Act; doing any other thing for the purposes or in connection with the Act; making an allegation that a person has contravened the Act.

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