



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

1. Overview

- 1.1 The College recognises that the richness of its communal life is greatly enhanced by the diversity of backgrounds, cultures and experiences of members of its communities, and that this rich communal life is an essential component of the College's provision of learning opportunities, and therefore:
- seeks to embed equality and inclusion in all its activities;
 - fosters equality of opportunity for all, empowering individuals and communities to fulfil their potential;
 - maintains its inclusive community, in which all connected to the College can feel respected and safe;
 - seeks to strengthen an internal culture that actively identifies and eliminates oppressive practice, whether that is prejudice, unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation;
 - influences other organisations to work for liberty, justice and equality within society more broadly.
- 1.2 These principles are founded on convictions that all human beings are created in the image of God, and, therefore, of equal and great value, and that unfair discrimination against people is an affront to God and morally indefensible.
- 1.3 This area of the College's activities is undertaken in full compliance with
- various legal statutes, including and particularly relevant to this area of activity, the Equality Act 2010;¹
 - all duties, including public sector duties, incumbent on the College as a Higher Education institution registered at Approved (Fee Cap) level with the Office for Students;
 - the College's charitable status and objects, its values and strategic goals.
- 1.4 The College offers some of its provision within Northern Ireland. The College proactively adopts an integrated approach to recruitment and participation in relation to the divides between Catholic and Protestant communities of this context. The activities of the College in Northern Ireland also fully comply with legislation applicable in that jurisdiction.²

¹ Other relevant legislation includes: the Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006; the Part Time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000; the Fixed Term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000; the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000; the Protection from Harassment Act 1997; Employment Rights Act 1996.

² This includes: including the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995; the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (particularly section 75); the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007; the Children's Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) Act 2015.

2. Responsibilities

- 2.1 The Board of Trustees is responsible for this policy and ensures that it is reviewed regularly and implemented appropriately throughout the College.
- 2.2 The Principal is responsible for ensuring compliance with the policy below trustee level.
- 2.3 This policy applies to applicants, students, staff, prospective staff, volunteers, trustees and others who are part of College communities. Contractors and suppliers undertaking work on behalf of the College are also required to act in accordance with it.

3. Definitions of the Equality Act

- 3.1 **Discrimination** means that a person is being treated unfairly because of who they are and covers “protected characteristics” of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.³
- 3.2 **Direct discrimination** is when an individual is put at a disadvantage because of a protected characteristic, even if unintentionally.
- 3.3 **Indirect discrimination** is when a practice applies to a wider group, but a person with a protected characteristic is unfairly disadvantaged in their ability to gain benefit.
- 3.4 **Harassment** is when a person engages with unwanted conduct towards another that has the purpose or effect of intimidation, degradation, humiliation, giving/taking offence or creating a hostile environment on the basis of a protected characteristic. This includes unwanted conduct of a sexual nature.

4. Implementation

- 4.1 The College’s commitments in this area (see 1.1 above) are implemented thoroughly. Other policies are aligned to this policy (see section 5 below).
- 4.2 Two reports are provided to the Board of Trustees on equalities: one relating to staff and the other to students, and both considering any changes to or issues in the implementation of relevant policies. In addition, the annual reflection of the Board of Trustees should include comments about equivalent issues within it. All three should pay attention to the multiple jurisdictions in which the College operates.
- 4.3 The College seeks to widen access and support participation in studies for members of disadvantaged groups. This is detailed in an Access and Participation Plan approved by the Office for Students.
- 4.4 The College proactively promotes good relations between communities, taking positive action as appropriate. This is given particular importance for the communities of Northern Ireland.
- 4.5 Wherever possible, annual programme reports reflect on recruitment, success and progression of identifiable groups of students.

³ The Northern Ireland Act 1998, section 75, has a list with some differences. The College’s approach is equitable to all and so people with all characteristics can expect to be treated fairly.

- 4.6 Students, staff and trustees receive relevant training at their respective induction processes and are informed of their duties and liabilities. All undergraduate students have classes relating to relevant issues. Students, staff and trustees are enabled to make appropriate complaints about any behaviour that contravenes this policy.
- 4.7 Students, staff and trustees are expected to support, implement and encourage others to act in accordance with this policy. Staff handbooks underline the expectation to model the challenging of oppressive behaviour.
- 4.8 Teaching material is expected to reflect the diversity of the student body and of the communities that students are preparing to serve.
- 4.9 Complaints relating to issues of equality, diversity and inclusion are handled through the normal complaints systems and with particular care.
- 4.10 This policy is easily accessible to students, staff and trustees by means of the VLE (students) and shared policy archive (staff and trustees).

5. Related Policies

- 5.1 Other policies of the College comply with this policy and with other regulatory policies and internal documentation of the College. Each policy gives more explicit detail in its own area.
- 5.2 Related trustee policies include:
 - Articles of Association
 - Disability Policy
 - Governance Policy
 - Safeguarding Policy
 - Strategic Plan
- 5.3 Related management policies include:
 - Employee Handbook
- 5.4 Related Academic Board policies include:
 - Academic Staff Induction
 - Admissions Policy
 - College Life Handbook
 - Enrolment and Registration Policy
 - Learning Assistance Policy
 - Social Media Guidelines

6. Document history

5 June 2020	Complete revision of previous policy, drawing particularly on relevant policies of the universities of Durham , Gloucestershire , and Oxford and of All Nations Christian College , and with reference to the policies of Bristol , Manchester , Sheffield , and York .
24 June 2020	Approved by Board of Trustees
6 July 2020	Accepted by Academic Board
1 March 2021	Approved by Board of Trustees Chair's Action: requirement of separate reporting on staff and students, in line with Governance Policy