



Single Equality Scheme

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Approved by:	FE Corporation				
Relevant to (please <input "="" checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bede	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Innersummit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NETA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RCC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SRC	
Signed (Lead Manager):	Adele Currie				
Print Name:	Adele Currie				

Introduction

The Single Equality Scheme is a reflection of our Group's values and a demonstration of our commitment to our responsibilities under the Equality Act, 2010.

We believe that all those who form the community at The Education Training Collective (Etc.) (governors, staff, students, visitors and contractors) are treated with dignity and respect. We take opportunities to celebrate diversity and we do everything we can to ensure there are no barriers to equality of opportunity.

The Education Training Collective Values

- High Performing but with Heart
- Quietly Confident with Absolute Focus on Success
- Building Real Skills for Real Jobs
- Proud to Serve our Students and Communities
- Aspirational but with Humility

Strategic Intent: Our Public Sector Duties

The Equality Act 2010 outlines our responsibilities to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Promote good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

The Equality Act brings together several pieces of existing legislation and expands the number of protected groups which are now categorised according to:

- Age
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Disability
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

This Single Equality Scheme describes our unified approach and strong commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion across the Group community, our legal obligations and how we will achieve this.

The curriculum and Student Support and Well-being teams can contribute to some key aspects of the Equality Duty, particularly in regard to promoting and celebrating diversity as part of our responsibility under the Prevent Duty through inclusive practice and community cohesion.

Please note that the term ‘Group’ is used throughout this scheme, as a generic term that encompasses all organisations within The Education Training Collective; namely Stockton Riverside College, Redcar and Cleveland College, Bede Sixth Form College, NETA and Tees Valley Catering. The term ‘staff’ is also used as a generic term that encompasses all groups of staff within the Group.

Key Principles

The purpose of this Single Equality Scheme is:

- To provide guidelines for good practice in all equity, diversity and inclusion matters relating to members of the Group community
- To provide guidelines in the provision of, and access to, the facilities, benefits and services that the Group provides
- To highlight and keep updated on current legislation on equity, diversity and inclusion
- To raise awareness with regard to discrimination and ensure that all members of the community are aware of their responsibilities under this legislation
- To develop and deliver the Single Equality Scheme action plan that ensures that the Group aspires to be outstanding in all matters relating to equity, diversity and inclusion
- To ensure that all members of the Group community are aware of issues relating to equality
- To ensure that all members of the Group community are aware of the scheme and our action to promote choice, opportunity and progression for all
- To create an inclusive environment, underpinned by fair and impartial practices and procedures, in which all members of the community can feel valued and respected
- To ensure adherence to relevant Group procedures

Developing the Scheme

We will seek the views of students on equality-related issues on an annual basis, to ensure that we are focusing on issues and developments that are relevant and of benefit to the students, mainly through the Learner Voice mechanism and through analysis of the data collected on student performance. Feedback from participants in equity, diversity and inclusion related events will also be considered.

We will continue to use a variety of methods to consult with staff. We will ensure that staff are regularly updated and invited to comment on equality related matters to ensure that it remains relevant and addresses any areas of concern.

We will continue to consult with wider communities across the group (employers, contractors and key stakeholders) to ensure that all of our partners are aware of our commitments and expectations in relation to equity, diversity and inclusion. The equity, diversity and inclusion strategy group will also continue to be a forum for determining the strategic direction of equity, diversity and inclusion related issues and membership is refreshed annually, to ensure that all objectives are met.

Meeting our Duties

We will seek to ensure that Governors, staff, students and stakeholders are aware of our Single Equality Scheme and the actions needed for its implementation and their own particular responsibilities in relation to the Single Equality Scheme. **See Appendix A.**

Harassment, Discrimination and Bullying

The Group Harassment, Discrimination and Bullying Policy has been developed to provide a consistent framework for all staff and to support the development of a working environment in which harassment, discrimination and bullying are known to be unacceptable and where individuals have the confidence to complain, without fear and that their concerns will be dealt with appropriately and fairly. See **Appendix C** for definitions and brief guidance.

The College will record hate crime reports from staff, students and members of the public, anonymously, if necessary, and will report to external agencies e.g. the police, where appropriate.

Sexual harassment duty (October 2024 law)

From 26 October 2024, the Group has a new proactive legal duty under the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023 to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of our workers in the course of employment, including harassment by third parties such as visitors, contractors, customers or service users. Sexual harassment is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. In practice, this means we will not wait for incidents to arise. We will assess risk hotspots, maintain clear reporting routes, train staff and managers, review patterns in complaints and data, and take timely action to prevent recurrence. If an Employment Tribunal finds that this preventative duty has been breached, compensation can be increased by up to 25 percent, so our approach must be active, visible and regularly reviewed

Appendices B and K provide further details of the Group's specific commitments in relation to the nine protected characteristics.

Monitoring and Reporting Our Progress

We will collect and analyse data to measure our progress towards the values set out in this Scheme.

Monitoring information will be distributed each term to members of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Group for information and planning purposes.

Appendix D details the information we will collect, analyse and monitor.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Group Director of HR and People Development and Group Head of Student Support and Wellbeing are responsible for leading on equity, diversity and Inclusion across the Group; however the whole Group community has a duty and responsibility to abide by the key principles contained in this scheme.

See **Appendix E** for full details of roles and responsibilities across all activities.

Good Practice in Staffing Issues

We will continue to ensure that all current and prospective staff are treated equitably, justly, fairly and without discrimination in their working lives, by applying all equalities legislation to our Human Resources practices.

We will continue to screen our policies for equality impact, as appropriate, and will take action where necessary.

We will also continue to promote equality of opportunity through our recruitment procedures, including the use of positive action and the monitoring of retention of staff.

Appendix F details our specific commitments to staffing issues.

Training

Both compulsory and non-compulsory equity, diversity and inclusion training programmes will be provided to support the Single Equality Scheme. This involves everyone throughout the Group (Governors, students, and all staff). Promoting equity, diversity and inclusion is a mandatory part of induction for all new staff and students. Training events for all will be publicised and monitored as part of the Group's quality review of staff and students' development.

See **Appendix H** for further information.

Implementing the Equality Duty

The Group will consider the needs of all individuals (staff, students and visitors) when shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to employment.

We will ensure that our decision making is robust, transparent and that we have fully considered the impact of our proposals. Having a sound decision making process not only fulfils our statutory requirements but it also ensures that we are better placed to deliver policies and services that are inclusive, efficient and effective.

Whilst the Equality Act does not explicitly require Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) to be conducted, we will consciously consider the three aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision-making.

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
2. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
3. Promote good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The following principles explain what is essential in order for the Equality Duty to be fulfilled when making decisions:

1. **Knowledge** – staff need to be aware of the requirements of the Equality Duty. Compliance with the Equality Duty involves staff knowing exactly what is expected of them and how they can achieve the Group’s expectations of them.

2. **Timeliness** – the Equality Duty must be complied with before and at the time that a particular policy is under consideration or decision is taken – that is, in the development of policy options, and in making a final decision.

3. **Real consideration** – consideration of the three aims of the Equality Duty must form an integral part of the decision-making process. We must prove that we have given the proposal serious and rigorous consideration and applied ‘due regard.’ We must also show that the process has influenced the final decision.

4. **Sufficient information** – the decision maker must consider what information they have and what further information may be needed in order to give proper consideration to the Equality Duty.

The EIA is conducted by completing five main questions:

1. Aims and objectives of the proposal
2. Outcomes and impacts of the proposal
3. Minimising the Negative impacts
4. Maximising the positive impacts
5. Incorporating or disregarding feedback.

During the decision making process the writer or owner of the policy must ensure that they have:

- Not unlawfully discriminated
- Engaged with stakeholders
- Engaged in an evidenced based decision making process
- Paid due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duties.
- Considered the impact of the proposal on equality groups

Publicity and Awareness of the Single Equality Scheme

The Group will ensure that all staff, students, visitors, stakeholders, contractors and suppliers are made aware of our Single Equality Scheme and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan and will be publicly available on our website. The Scheme will be drawn to the attention of students and staff at induction and new staff will be expected to subscribe to it at the time of appointment. The Group will continuously develop its methods of publicising the scheme to students.

Positive Action to Promote Choice, Opportunity and Progression

We will continue to ensure equality of access to the delivery of our programmes of learning. We will ensure that all members of the Group community can learn, teach, train and succeed in a mutually supportive environment.

We will also continue to ensure equality of access to employment through the use of positive action, where appropriate, and within the scope of the Equality Act 2010. Applicants for posts at the Group are routinely asked prior to interview if special adaptations to enable participation are required; those applicants with a protected characteristic may be offered an interview under positive action where criteria are met.

Appendix G details our specific commitments to procurement.

See **Appendix I** for our specific commitments to promoting choice, opportunity and progression.

Complaints relating to Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging

Staff and students will be made aware of the complaints procedures via induction. Copies of the Single Equality Scheme and Complaints Procedure will be made available around the Group (in Receptions, LRCs, Offices and on the Group websites) and to any member of the Group community on request.

We will monitor the equality data of complainants, whenever possible, and use this information to ensure that there are no discrepancies in the level or type of complaints from different equality groups.

An electronic copy of this document can be downloaded from the Group websites.

Please contact the Group on 01624 865 400 for information on how to make a complaint or email us at info@stockton.ac.uk

See **Appendix J** for further information regarding complaints.

What happens if the Single Equality Scheme is not adhered to?

The Education Training Collective will not tolerate behaviour which breaches its Single Equality Scheme and will initiate action which may be the provision of support and training, or action of a disciplinary nature (where appropriate) against those who do not meet the standards of behaviour required.

Behaviour which breaches the Single Equality Scheme may include:

- Acts of wilful, unfair and unjustified discrimination, victimisation, harassment or bullying against members of the Group community
- Acts of discrimination, harassment, victimisation or bullying by contractors, visitors to the Group, members of the Group community or members of the public.

Consultation and Communication

As we continue to develop the scheme we will consult with a range of stakeholders (for example):

- Students
- Parents
- Staff
- Governors
- Employers

- Community and voluntary groups

Our stakeholders will be informed of events, developments and initiatives, as they arise. We will develop a number of specific events throughout the year which will help us to achieve our equality duties and gather feedback from our stakeholders.

Appendix A - Meeting our Duties

Ensuring awareness of our Single Equality Scheme to ensure success and responsibilities

- Staff, students, contractors (including subcontractors), suppliers and stakeholders are aware of the value placed upon equality of opportunity and that action will be taken in the event of any breach of the Scheme
- Governors and staff have access to relevant and appropriate information which assists them to plan, implement and monitor actions to carry out their responsibilities under the Scheme
- The Group's publicity materials present appropriate and positive messages about the nine protected characteristics
- Schemes of work, lesson content and teaching resources demonstrate sensitivity and positive promotion of the nine protected characteristics
- All students can access appropriate support and facilities
- Applicants for employment are drawn from a wide pool, with positive action, where appropriate, to encourage applications from under-represented groups
- Recruitment and promotion procedures are designed and implemented to eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Staff development schemes are designed to meet the particular needs and enhance the skills of individuals of all under-represented groups

Appendix B - Our Equalities Commitments

Sex Equality Commitments

We are committed to:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of sex
- Advancing equality of opportunity and promoting good relations between men and women
- Monitoring any gender pay gaps and taking action, as appropriate
- Gathering and using information on how the Group's policies and practices affect sex equality in the workforce and in the delivery of services to students and staff
- Consulting with stakeholders and taking account of relevant information in order to determine sex equality objectives
- Assessing the impact of current and proposed policies and practices on sex equalities

Race Equality Commitments

We are committed to:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation relating to race
- Advancing equality of opportunity
- Promoting good relations between persons of different races
- Putting in place arrangements for implementing this scheme, publicising its contents and the results of its monitoring and effectiveness
- Assessing the impact of its policies on students and staff of different races

Disability Equality Commitments

The Group has adopted the 'Social Model of Disability' which promotes the right of a disabled person to belong, to be valued, to choose and to make decisions. In adopting this model, we accept that we will have to strive to remove barriers created by attitudes, systems and practices that prevent participation by disabled persons.

We are committed to:

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation of disabled persons that is related to their disability
- Advancing equality of opportunity for disabled people
- Promoting good relations
- Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled persons
- Encouraging participation by disabled persons in public life
- Ensuring that all reasonable adjustments are made in accordance with the Equality Act 2010
- Taking steps to take account for a person's disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons
- Gathering and using information on how the Group's policies and practices affect the educational opportunities available to, and on the achievements of, disabled students and staff

Age Equality Commitments

We are committed to:

- Advancing equality of opportunity for people of all ages
- Promoting good relations

- Eliminating discrimination harassment and victimisation related to age
- Creating a working environment underpinned by fair and equitable practices and procedures in which all members of the community feel comfortable
- Actively tackling age discrimination whether overt, covert or by omission
- Eliminating any criterion, provision or practice that disadvantages people of a particular age, unless it can be objectively justified

Sexual Orientation Equality Commitments

We are committed to:

- Advancing equality of opportunity for people of all sexual orientations
- Promoting good relations
- Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation related to sexual orientation
- Working with other institutions, local communities and other partners to eliminate discrimination based on a person's sexual orientation and to encourage and promote good practice

Gender Reassignment / Gender Identity Equality Commitments

We are committed to:

- Advancing equality of opportunity for transgender people.
- Promoting good relations
- Embedding systemic action to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation related to gender reassignment / identity
- Promoting gender identity equality widely and consistently, alongside other equality strands
- Working with other institutions, local communities and others, to tackle gender discrimination and to encourage and promote good practice
- policies will be kept under review in line with current Equality Act interpretation and EHRC guidance, while upholding protections for all.

Religion or Belief Equality Commitments

We are committed to:

- Advancing equality of opportunity for people of different religions or beliefs,
- Promoting good relations
- Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation related to religion or belief,
- Actively tackling discrimination regarding religion or belief, whether overt, covert or by omission
- Eliminating religious harassment (unwanted behaviour based on religion and which includes proselytising i.e. seeking to convert others to a particular religion or sect)
- Working with other institutions, local communities and others to tackle discrimination regarding religion or belief and to encourage and promote good practice
- Providing a quiet /prayer room facility for use by all faiths and beliefs

Pregnancy and Maternity Equality Commitments

We are committed to:

- Advancing equality of opportunity for women who are pregnant or have given birth in the last 26 weeks or are breastfeeding (Including a female student of any age)
- Promoting good relations

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation related to pregnancy and maternity
- Providing a quiet room or facility for breastfeeding

Marriage and Civil Partnership

We are committed to:

- Treating civil partners in the same way as married people in employment and training. Any benefits given to married employees will also be offered to civil partners, including flexible working, statutory paternity pay, paternity and adoption leave, health insurance and survivor pensions

Appendix C - Harassment, Discrimination and Bullying

Harassment

The Equality Act 2010 states that there are three types of harassment that are unlawful:

- Harassment related to a relevant protected characteristic
- Sexual harassment
- Less favourable treatment of a person because they submit to or reject sexual harassment or harassment related to sex.

Harassment occurs when a person is subjected to unwanted behaviour which is related to one or more of the protected characteristics, which has either the purpose or the effect of:

- Violating a person's dignity
- Creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment
- Unwanted, unwelcome or uninvited behaviour.

A person does not have to say that they object to the behaviour for it to be unwanted.

Behaviour associated with harassment can take many forms and is defined as unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct. (See the table below for examples).

Harassment Related to a Protected Characteristic

Harassment related to a relevant protected characteristic means harassment based on age, disability, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, sex, race and religion or belief.

"Related to" means and includes situations where a person who is subjected to the unwanted behaviour does not share the protected characteristic themselves but there is a connection between the behaviour and the protected characteristic.

For example:

A student might complain of harassment, in a classroom setting, because a member of staff comments that 'all men are useless', even if the comments were not directed at that student.

Sexual harassment duty (October 2024 law)

From 26 October 2024, the Group has a new proactive legal duty under the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023 to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of our workers in the course of employment, including harassment by third parties such as visitors, contractors, customers or service users. Sexual harassment is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. In practice, this means we will not wait for incidents to arise. We will assess risk hotspots, maintain clear reporting routes, train staff and managers, review patterns in complaints and data, and take timely action to prevent recurrence. If an Employment Tribunal finds that this preventative duty has been breached, compensation can be increased by up to 25 percent, so our approach must be active, visible and regularly reviewed.

It is also unlawful to treat a person less favourably because they either submit to or reject sexual harassment or harassment related to their sex.

See table for examples of unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature.

Behaviour	Example	Sexual nature
Including but not limited to:		
Physical	Assault, pushing, standing too close, intimidating stance, threats of violence.	Inappropriate touching, sexual assault, coercion of sexual acts
Verbal	Shouting, offensive emails, phone conversations, text messages, comments or jokes	Sexual jokes, emails or comments
Non-Verbal	Hostility, display of offensive pictures and photographs	Pornographic photographs or drawings

All members of the Group community, staff and students alike, by their own behaviour and their response to others, are legally responsible for helping to ensure that individuals do not suffer any form of harassment and that they are encouraged and supported in making complaints.

Difficulty in deciding what constitutes harassment should not deter anyone from complaining of behaviour that they find offensive or distressing. The Group will, however, take vexatious allegations very seriously and may take disciplinary action as a result.

The Equality Act states that it is not necessary for a person to immediately say that the behaviour that they object to is unwanted for the behaviour to be construed as harassment.

Some behaviour, that causes offence or distress, may be conscious or deliberate or may arise from thoughtlessness or insensitivity. In either case, the person causing harassment should be given a clear signal that their behaviour is unacceptable. This may be done directly or through a suitable third party. No one should be deterred from complaining of behaviour, which distresses them, by embarrassment, intimidation or fear of publicity. The need for confidentiality will be respected wherever possible.

Bullying is unjustified and inappropriate behaviour which is threatening or humiliating.

Discrimination is any action, which deprives an individual of rights or opportunities. It may be either direct or indirect, by association, or by perception.

Direct discrimination occurs when you treat a person less favourably than you treat (or would treat) another person because of a protected characteristic and this is done deliberately or unjustifiably.

Discrimination based on association also occurs when you treat an individual less favourably because of their association with another person who has a protected characteristic (other than pregnancy/maternity).

This might occur when you treat a student less favourably because their sibling, parent, carer or friend has a protected characteristic.

Discrimination based on perception also occurs when you treat someone less favourably because you mistakenly think that they have a protected characteristic (other than pregnancy and maternity).

Discrimination because of pregnancy and maternity is the treatment of a woman less favourably because she is or has been pregnant, has given birth in the last 26 weeks or is breastfeeding a baby who is 26 weeks or younger. It is direct sex discrimination to treat a woman less favourably because she is breastfeeding a child who is more than 26 weeks old.

Discrimination arising from disability is treating a disabled person unfavourably because of something connected with their disability when this cannot be justified, and failing to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people.

Indirect discrimination occurs when you apply an unjustifiable provision, criteria or practice in the same way for all people or a particular group of people, but this has the effect of those people who share a protected characteristic within the general group, being subject to a particular disadvantage. It doesn't matter that you did not intend to cause a disadvantage with a particular protected characteristic. What does matter is whether your action does or would disadvantage people compared with people who do not share that characteristic.

'Disadvantage' within the Group could mean denial of an opportunity or choice, deterrence, rejection or exclusion.

Indirect pregnancy and maternity discrimination are not covered under the equality act although it could be included in the definition of direct sex discrimination.

Institutional Discrimination is the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their protected characteristics.

Appendix D - Monitoring Our Progress

To inform the setting of targets and the measurement of our progress in achieving them, we will collect as a basic minimum and analyse the following information in 2024/25:

For students:

- The CE-IG strategy sets the monitoring framework and includes:
 - Gender, disability, age and ethnic profiles of students (Group Director of Quality)
 - Applications and conversion rates for admission to programmes across any groups (Group Marketing Director)
 - Retention rates across all groups (Group Director of Quality)
 - Achievement rates of all groups (Group Director of Quality)
 - The progression rates of all groups (Group Marketing Director)
- Work placements across all groups (Group Director of Business Development and Innovation)
- Relationships and Behaviour management action relating to all groups (Group Head of Student Support and Well-being)
- Complaints by students or their sponsors (Group Director of Quality)
- Assessment appeals by all groups (Group Director of Quality)

For staff: (Group Director of Human Resources and People Development)

- Disability, gender, age, ethnic profiles of staff in post, by job family and type of work
- Applications for employment and appointments,
- Selection success rates
- Type of contract (permanent, temporary) by group
- Promotion rates of all groups
- Disciplinary proceedings for all groups
- The number of staff who benefit or suffer detriment as a result of performance assessment procedures e.g. including appraisal, capability proceedings by group
- Grievances by group
- Satisfaction surveys by group
- The number of staff who cease employment by group
- Gender pay gaps (See Appendix L)

The information will be used to:

- Decide whether there are differences in the way different groups are treated
- Decide if there are any gaps in recruitment, attainment and success of different groups of students
- Decide if there are any gaps in recruitment and pay for staff
- Investigate the underlying reasons for any differences
- Identify areas where specific action could be taken and ensure that it is taken
- Highlight any unfairness, disadvantage or possible discrimination and take action where appropriate.
- Develop and monitor the Single Equality Scheme Action Plan
- Compare Group data to local and national statistics in order to identify success and areas for improvement

Appendix E - Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Making sure the Group complies with the Single Equality Scheme and meets all public sector equality duties
- Making sure the Single Equality Scheme and its procedures are followed

The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Governor is responsible for:

- Updating the Governing Body on strategic equity, diversity and inclusion matters and providing a link role for communication
- Challenge and hold to account the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion “management teams”
- Attendance at meetings of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Group
- Participating in the formulation of strategy relating to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

The Chief Executive and Group Principal and Senior Leadership Team are responsible for:

- Giving a consistent and high profile lead on all equity, diversity and inclusion issues
- Promoting equity, diversity and inclusion inside and outside the institution
- Making sure the Single Equality Scheme and its procedures are followed

The Strategic Lead is responsible for:

- Co-ordinating work on equity, diversity and inclusion
- Publishing monitoring information and the Annual Report
- Reviewing and developing the Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan

The Group Director of Quality:

- Supplying accurate data and monitoring information, including reports relating to student achievement and supporting monitoring and report creation
- Ensuring that equity diversity and inclusion is included with the students relationships and behaviour policy.

The Group Director of Human Resources and People Development is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the Group staffing profile is more reflective of sector averages, where reasonable and appropriate
- Producing reports detailing staffing information relating to demographic profiles, including staff profile, pay gaps, grievances and disciplinary action
- Co-ordinating equity, diversity and inclusion related training for staff
- The use of positive action in recruitment, when appropriate

Managers are responsible for:

- Putting the Scheme and its strategies and procedures into practice
- Making sure that all staff know their responsibilities, and receive support and training in carrying these out
- Following the relevant procedures and investigating staff or students who may be discriminating unlawfully

All staff are responsible for:

- Dealing with equity, diversity and inclusion incidents and being able to recognise and tackle bias and stereotyping
- Consistently challenging any inappropriate language or behaviour of staff and students
- Promoting equal opportunities, eliminating discrimination and promoting good relations

- Taking up training and learning opportunities as advised
- Ensuring that they report any incidents that contravene this scheme to their manager or other appropriate member of staff

All contractors and service providers, including subcontractors, are responsible for:

- Being aware of our Single Equality Scheme
- Following the Single Equality Scheme and any equality conditions in contracts or agreements

Appendix F - Staffing (Group Director of Human Resources and People Development)

We will:

- Operate a recruitment process that is based on equality of opportunity for all
- Advertise all vacancies in the appropriate medium and have regard to the staff profile and its imbalances in terms of age, disability, gender and ethnicity
- Ensure a consistent approach to the interpretation of staff documentation (e.g. contracts of employment) and implementation of policies and procedures across the Group
- Monitor and review, through our quality assurance processes, that equal opportunities during employment are adhered to
- Treat all staff with dignity and respect, valuing the contribution of each member of staff
- Monitor the composition of staff and job applicants across the Group and in each department/service by gender, ethnicity, age and disability and address identified imbalances and under representation
- Use positive action where appropriate
- Ensure there is no direct or indirect discrimination in all aspects of the employment relationship, including recruitment, pay, working conditions, training, promotion, dismissal, references and pensions
- Monitor and report on the equality information of staff leaving employment

Appendix G - Procurement (Chief Operating Officer)

We will:

- Ensure that all partners, contractors and consultants are committed to equity, diversity and inclusion in service provision
- Ensure our procurement policy does not exclude smaller groups and that consultants and contractors demonstrate good practice and sign up to the organisation's policies
- Ensure that suppliers and contractors are aware of and comply with the Group's Single Equality Scheme, including through the tender process
- Include equality clauses in all contracts and service specifications

Appendix H - Training (Group Head of Student Support and Wellbeing and Group Director of Human Resources and People Development)

Training will be developed to allow maximum flexibility and to be reactive to departmental need, changes in legislation and external events. It will be comprised of a range of specialist training events, underpinned by an online, certificated mandatory programme.

At the end of each academic year the content of relevant courses will be reviewed and a further detailed plan will be developed.

Monitoring

All approved staff training is recorded and attendance monitored via Human Resources.

Appendix I - Our Commitment to Promoting Choice, Opportunity and Progression (Group Director of Marketing)

We will:

- Operate an Admissions Scheme which is based on the ability to succeed and does not involve unduly restrictive conditions or requirements
- Review the information that we provide about our programmes to ensure that it is clear, contains relevant facts and is easily understood by all potential students
- Seek to make staff more aware of the cultural assumptions, stereotypes and biases which may exist within curriculum materials and assessment methods, and encourage and support them in developing curriculum materials which reflect a wider range of experience and culture
- Monitor the composition of the student body in each curriculum area by gender, ethnicity, age and disability and address identified imbalance and under representation
- Monitor the achievement of students by gender, ethnicity, age and disability and seek to address identified imbalances
- Ensure, through our quality assurance policies, that equal opportunities issues are addressed in the design and delivery of learning programmes
- Review our portfolio of programmes to ensure that the range of opportunities provided reflects the needs of all sections of the community
- Reserve the right to refuse admission to our premises or any of our courses on the grounds of security, safety or breach of the Single Equality Scheme.

Appendix J - Complaints (Group Director of Quality)

All incidents and complaints of an equal opportunities nature, however informal, should be logged with the Group Director of Quality, anonymously if necessary, showing the nature of the complaint and any outcome. Such a record should be kept, even if the individuals concerned did not wish to make the matter formal. The Group will monitor all complaints on a regular basis.

For those who wish to make a formal complaint, full details of how to do this can be found in the Group's Complaints Procedure, which is available on the Group's Intranet, at receptions and on our website

Appendix K - Legislation

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 brought together and strengthened previous equality legislation. It applies across employment, education, the provision of goods, facilities and services, and includes the admission, support and treatment of students. The Act makes it unlawful to discriminate against individuals based on nine protected characteristics:

- Age
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Disability
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Age

Age is defined by reference to an age group. An age group can refer to people of the same age or a range of ages. It may be broad, such as “people under 25”, narrow, such as those born in a particular year, relative, such as “older than me”, or based on actual or perceived appearance. Age discrimination can occur at any point in employment or education and may affect younger and older people alike.

Disability

A disability is a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. A medical diagnosis is not required for protection under the Act; the focus is on the effect of the impairment rather than its cause.

The Group has a duty to make reasonable adjustments to remove or reduce disadvantage faced by disabled people. We must not unlawfully discriminate, harass or victimise individuals because of disability, and we will anticipate the needs of disabled students, staff and visitors where reasonable.

Gender Reassignment

Gender reassignment is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as a personal process rather than a medical one. It involves a person proposing to transition, beginning to transition or having transitioned, including expressing their gender in a way that differs from the sex recorded at birth. Protection does not depend on medical interventions or surgery.

A person will be protected because of gender reassignment where they:

- make their intention known to someone
- propose to undergo gender reassignment (whether or not it involves surgery)

- begin or continue to dress, behave or live according to their gender identity
- undergo any treatment related to gender reassignment
- receive legal recognition under the Gender Recognition Act 2004

The Group will keep its policies under review in line with current Equality Act interpretation and EHRC guidance, including areas relating to single sex spaces and safeguarding, while upholding protections for all staff and students.

Marriage and Civil Partnership

Marriage is a legally recognised union between two people. Civil partnership is also a legally recognised relationship open to both same sex and opposite sex couples. Under the Equality Act, employees are protected against unlawful discrimination because they are married or in a civil partnership. This protection applies in employment. It does not extend to students.

Civil partners must be treated no less favourably than married employees in relation to terms, conditions and access to employment benefits.

Pregnancy and Maternity

Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period following birth. In employment, protection covers pregnancy, maternity leave and any unfavourable treatment related to either. In non work situations, protection applies for 26 weeks after birth and includes unfavourable treatment because a woman is breastfeeding.

Race

Race is a broad protected characteristic covering colour, nationality, ethnic origin and national origin. A person may experience discrimination because they belong to a racial group that shares one or more of these features.

Nationality refers to citizenship or legal membership of a state. National origin refers to the place a person comes from and is linked to birth or heritage. Ethnic origin refers to shared history, cultural traditions or other features that create a distinct ethnic group. Courts have recognised Irish Travellers, Jews, Romany Gypsies and Sikhs as protected ethnic groups.

Religion or Belief

Religion or belief includes any religion with a clear structure and belief system, any philosophical belief that meets established legal tests, and a lack of religion or belief.

A philosophical belief is protected where it is genuinely held, relates to a substantial aspect of human life, is coherent and serious, is consistent with human dignity and is worthy of respect in a democratic society. Opinions based solely on current information or preferences do not meet this threshold.

Sex

Sex discrimination occurs when a person is treated unfavourably because they are male or female. It can affect anyone. The Equality Act protects men and women from direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation because of sex. The Act also protects employees from discrimination related to marriage or civil partnership in the employment context.

Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation includes attraction towards people of the same sex, the opposite sex or both. The Act protects individuals from discrimination, harassment or victimisation because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation or the orientation of someone they are associated with.

Positive Action

The Equality Act permits education providers and employers to take proportionate steps to address disadvantage, different needs or low participation affecting people with protected characteristics. These steps are known as positive action. They may include targeted initiatives, additional support or outreach work, provided the action is proportionate to the disadvantage identified.

Positive action does not allow positive discrimination. Decisions such as recruitment or promotion must still be based on merit. Where two candidates are genuinely equally qualified, an employer may choose to appoint the candidate from an under represented group if this is part of a lawful positive action approach.

Other Relevant Legislation

Equality law operates alongside wider legislation that supports rights, fairness, safety and good employment practice. Relevant statutes include:

- Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974
- Employment Rights Act 1996 and subsequent amendments
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
- Working Time Regulations
- Part Time Workers Regulations
- Fixed Term Employees Regulations

This list is not exhaustive and will be kept under review in line with changes to legislation and case law.

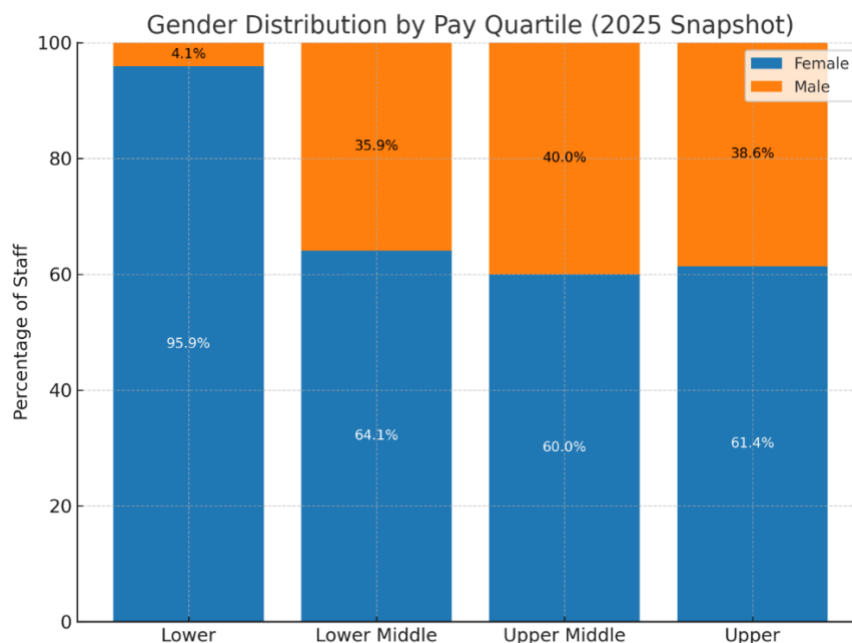
Appendix L - Gender Pay Gap Reporting (Group Director of HR and People Development)

Under the Equality Act 2010, employers with over 250 staff are required to publish annual Gender Pay Gap (GPG) figures. The snapshot date for this return is **31 March 2025**, covering **580 staff** (408 female, 172 male).

The Group's overall workforce is **70% female and 30% male**. However, this balance is not consistent across all pay quartiles:

- **Lower quartile:** 96% female (predominantly cleaning and catering roles).
- **Upper quartile:** 61% female, 39% male (technical and senior roles).
- This distribution demonstrates the concentration of women in lower-paid roles and the over-representation of men in higher-paid positions.

Count of Gender					
	LOWER	LOWER MIDDLE	UPPER	UPPER MIDDLE	Grand Total
Female	139	93	87	89	408
Male	6	52	58	56	172
Grand Total	145	145	145	145	580
Female %	95.86	64.14	60.00	61.38	70.34
Male %	4.14	35.86	40.00	38.62	29.66
total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00



Statutory results

- **Mean GPG:** 12.2% (men earn £0.88 per hour more on average).
- **Median GPG:** 18.7% (men earn £3.28 per hour more on the median measure).

Interpretation

- The pay gap does not reflect unequal pay for equal work. Our pay policies and equal pay audits confirm compliance with equal pay legislation.
- The gap is explained by workforce profile. The group employs cleaners and caterers directly (96% women), unlike most colleges which outsource these functions. By choosing ethical employment, these staff access pensions, sick pay, annual leave and wellbeing benefits, but their inclusion in statutory reporting increases our apparent GPG relative to sector peers.
- Benchmarking confirms our gap (12.2% mean, 18.7% median) is above the AoC sector average (8-10%) but broadly consistent with the national median of 14.3%.

Note on interpretation:

Our median figure looks more stark than the mean because so many of our women are in cleaning and catering jobs, which sit at the lower end of pay. That pushes the midpoint for women's pay down more sharply than it does for men. The mean gap of 12.2% gives a fairer sense across the whole workforce, while the median gap of 18.7% simply shows how concentrated women are in those lower quartile roles.

Workforce Makeup

580 staff
70% Women (408)
30% Men (172)

Quartiles

Lowest Paid: 96% Women
Highest Paid: 61% Women, 39% Men
(Men over-represented at top)

Pay Gap (Average & Median)

Mean: Women £16.53 vs Men £18.82 → 12.2% Gap
Median: Women £14.30 vs Men £17.58 → 18.7% Gap

The Paradox

We employ cleaners & caterers directly.
They get pensions, holidays, wellbeing days.
Other colleges outsource them.
This ethical choice makes our gap look bigger.

Accessibility of the Scheme

The Scheme is also available in a variety of formats including large print on request.