



PG02 Equality and Diversity

Version Date: September 2024

Review Date: September 2027

1. Introduction

North East Scotland College's Vision articulates how it will, through the delivery of high-quality education and training:

- drive and support innovation and economic prosperity,
- raise aspiration,
- create success, and
- promote diversity, fairness and opportunity for all

providing individuals, businesses and communities in the North East of Scotland with 21st century skills.

This ethos is supported by our values which apply to everyone who comes to the College to learn or work.

Our Values are:

Commitment and Excellence

- Understanding and responding to the needs of our students, staff, key stakeholders and customers
- Being business-like and professional
- Maintaining a clear focus on our goals and ensuring that these are achieved through effective planning and organisation
- Achieving excellence by continually evaluating and improving our services
- Ensuring our processes are consistent, accessible, effective and efficient.

Empowerment and Engagement

- Creating an environment where innovation and creativity are encouraged and can flourish
- Providing clear direction, information and communication
- Providing development opportunities to ensure that we have the skills, knowledge and confidence to perform to the best of our ability
- Giving recognition and praise
- Encouraging and supporting collaboration.

Respect and Diversity

- Valuing the experience and talent of all
- Treating others with dignity and respect
- Creating an accessible, inclusive learning and working environment
- Being fair, open and transparent to ensure a culture of mutual trust and integrity.

Additionally, the College has legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure the organisation is free from unlawful discrimination and to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty as follows:

2. The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 protects people with protected characteristics from discrimination. There are 9 protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010:

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

3. Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under the Equality Act 2010

General Duties:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, in particular the need to:
 - remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic
 - take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it
 - encourage persons with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low other activities where their participation is low
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it from different protected characteristic groups

For the PSED the relevant protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief (including lack of belief)
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

The PSED also applies to marriage and civil partnership, but only in respect to the requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other prohibited conduct in employment.

In addition, for the purposes of assessment and certification, the college will also, to avoid discrimination and ensure all candidates have equal opportunities for assessment, consider any other factors within the constraints of available resources and current legislation.

Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland):

There are also specific duties that apply to public authorities in Scotland, including the need to:

- Report progress on mainstreaming the equality duty into all functions
- Publish a set of equality outcomes that cover all protected characteristics
- Publish a report on the progress made to achieve the equality outcomes
- Assess and review policies and practices against the needs of the general duty
- Gather information on the protected characteristics of employees and demonstrate the progress made in gathering and using the information to better perform the equality duty
- Publish board gender diversity information as part of mainstreaming reports
- Publish gender pay gap information, and publish statements on equal pay and occupational segregation for gender, race and disability
- Have due regard to the general duty in public procurement
- Publish the above information in a manner that is accessible

The College will not tolerate unfair or unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation by staff, students, visitors, contractors or other stakeholders in any areas of its activities.

4. Scope

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear college guidance regarding equality and diversity and to communicate key principles, structures and monitoring arrangements. This will ensure that the College advances equality and inclusion whilst adhering to legal obligations within its equality and diversity duty. This policy is applicable to all staff, students, visitors and contractors in the College.

5. Implementation:

The values and principles referred to in this policy are implemented through the College's Leadership Team and Equalities & Wellbeing Committee. Specific aims are published within the College's Equality Outcomes and associated action plan which are aligned to the College's Regional Outcome Agreement. Progress against the Equality Outcomes is reported every two years and is published on the College's website.

This policy is also supported by a number of associated policies and procedures. These are available on the College Intranet.

The College will take steps to ensure that it actively advances equality, diversity and inclusion for:

Students in:

- the curriculum, learning and teaching and assessment
- access and facilities
- student recruitment, admission, outcomes
- student information, advice, guidance and support
- working with external stakeholders
- procurement and contracted-out services.

The College will also make such reasonable adjustments as it can to accommodate additional needs. Within the overall requirements of equality of opportunity, the College recognises the particular needs of certain groups of students and will, where possible, provide the additional learning, study or language support required to enable individuals with those needs to take part in college provision. The College will also, in keeping with assessment arrangements provided by awarding bodies, make reasonable adjustments to assessment to accommodate additional needs.

The College will take steps to ensure that it advances equality, diversity and inclusion for:

Staff in:

Across all aspects of the employment cycle including:

- recruitment and selection
- staff development/ Continuous Professional Development
- equal pay
- work life balance
- conduct
- performance review
- leaving the College.

In order to promote equality, diversity and inclusion for staff, the College will also make reasonable adjustments for staff where appropriate.

6. College Environment and Facilities

The College provides a welcoming, safe environment which encourages access and participation by all sections of the community to high quality learning, support and working facilities.

The College is committed to ensuring that:

- Accommodation is welcoming, accessible to all and appropriate for learning and work;
- Learning resources provide and support an inclusive learning experience;
- Student Support Services enhance students' total learning experience;
- The culture enables staff and students to observe and respect individual needs;
- The environment is safe, secure and free from bullying, harassment and discrimination.

6.1 Contractors and Visitors

Contractors and suppliers, including those who provide work placements to students, are bound by the terms and conditions under which they operate including the need to act in ways that are consistent with this policy. The procurement process to appoint contractors and suppliers will include a commitment to equality and diversity which is in line with this policy.

Visitors are required to behave in ways that are consistent with this policy and to seek advice and guidance from a member of the College staff if they are unclear as to what is expected of them.

7. Responsibilities

Everyone in the College has responsibilities under this policy. There are responsibilities that are generic to both staff and students and then there are some that are specific to staff roles.

It is everyone's responsibility to:

- Behave in ways that uphold the College's Vision and Values, this Equality and Diversity policy and the policies and procedures associated with it.
- Speak out or report any breaches of the policy.
- Think about and understand how their own assumptions and prejudices affect the way they behave towards others and then act appropriately.

Students have a responsibility to:

- Conduct themselves at all times in a way that shows consideration for all members of the College community and is not detrimental to the reputation of the College;
- Observe College regulations;
- Show respect for the College environment and encourage others to do the same
- Not behave in any way which is offensive to others; Treat everyone with respect.

Staff have a responsibility to:

- Treat all members of the College community with dignity and respect
- Act as a role model in relation to the expectations outlined by the Employee Code of Conduct, College's Vision & Values, this Equalities and Diversity policy and the policies and procedures associated with it.
- Be aware of their responsibilities outlined in the Equality Act 2010

Managers have a responsibility to:

- Ensure that all those within their team work positively and promote Equality and Diversity and provide support where that is appropriate.
- Act as a role model.
- Include Equality and Diversity as a measure in considering the quality and standard of what is delivered and how.
- Deal with any complaints related to Equality and Diversity or breaches of this policy promptly, fairly and objectively in accordance with the appropriate procedure.
- Work with others in the College to ensure that the Equality Outcomes and outcomes of this policy are achieved.
- Treat everyone with respect.

Leadership Team has a responsibility to:

- Promote an ethos and culture that reflects the commitments in this policy.
- Act as role models.
- Ensure that there are sufficient resources within the College to achieve this policy and the Equality Outcomes.
- Ensure that Equality and Diversity is aligned to the Regional Outcome Agreement as the main strategy document of the College.
- Maintain a programme of development and other events to keep staff up to date on their duties and responsibilities.
- Facilitate appropriate Groups and Committees for consultation and communication.
- Ensure that the College responds to its legal obligations in relation to Equality and Diversity and fulfils its obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- Understand their own role in fulfilling these duties.

The Regional Board has a responsibility to:

- Ensure the College fulfils its obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty
- Understand their own role in fulfilling these duties.

8. Equality Impact Assessments

An equality impact assessment is a process of documenting where consideration is given to ensuring that the policy, procedure or practice does not unlawfully discriminate, how it might better advance equality and if it might affect good relations between groups. The College has a process whereby all proposed new or revised policies, procedures and practices are assessed for their impact on equality.

9. Monitoring

The College will monitor its effectiveness in providing equality of opportunity through:

- collation of data on student applications, enrolments, retention, attainment and progression etc.;
- collation of data on staff recruitment, pay, succession, training etc.;
- analysis of responses to questions relating to equal opportunities on college questionnaires and focus groups
- analysis of complaints
- analysis of student disciplinary cases
- analysis of staff disciplinary cases
- quality assurance and self-evaluation processes that incorporate a focus on equality

- analysis of feedback from consultation with partners within communities on the promotion of equality and diversity.

Status:	Approved	Summary of Changes
Approved by:	HR Committee & Regional Board	Added section on Equality Act 2010 covering all protected characteristics; changed wording in PSED section to verbatim from legislation
Date of version:	September 2024	
Reviewed by DPO:	November 2019	Added in sentence re Specific Duties
Responsibility for Policy:	Regional Board	
Responsibility for Review:	Director of People Services	
Review date:	September 2027	Added section for Staff in responsibilities.
EIA date:	September 2024	

DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT (DPIA)

<p>Does the activity that this policy or procedure relates to use personal data in any way? (Use may refer to collecting and gathering; storing electronically; storing by paper; sharing with other parties (internal or external to college); use of images as well as written information; retaining and archiving; or erasing, deleting and destroying)</p>	Yes
<p>Does the activity that this policy or procedure relates to use special category personal data in any way? (Special category data is data about: race; ethnic origin; politics; religion; trade union membership; genetics; biometrics (where used for ID purposes); health; sex life; or sexual orientation)</p>	Yes
<p>Does the activity that this policy or procedure relates to involve the use of social media or a third-party system?</p>	No

If the answer is 'yes' to one or more of the above questions, the Data Protection Officer must be consulted.

Date of DPO consultation:	November 2019
<p>Description of outcome and actions required (if any):</p> <p>No changes required</p>	
DPIA screening/full DPIA required:	No

Equality and Diversity Policy

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Form

Part 1. Background Information. (Please enter relevant information as specified.)

Title of Policy or Procedure. Details of Relevant Practice:	Equality and Diversity Policy
Person(s) Responsible.	Director of People Services
Date of Assessment:	September 2024
What are the aims of the policy, procedure or practice being considered?	See policy document.
Who will this policy, procedure or practice impact upon?	All staff, students and visitors to the College.

Part 2. Public Sector Equality Duty comparison (Consider the proposed action against each element of the PSED and describe potential impact, which may be positive, neutral or negative. Provide details of evidence.)

Need	Evidence
Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.	Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under the Equality Act 2010 Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland)
Impact: This policy is a statement of how the College intends to comply with legislation meet the General and Specific Duties and advance Equality and Diversity.	
Need	Evidence
Advancing Equality of Opportunity	Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under the Equality Act 2010 Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland)
Impact: This policy sets out specifically the steps required and responsibilities for college staff and students in meeting the requirements set out in the PSED	

Equality and Diversity Policy

Need	Evidence
Promoting Good relations	Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under the Equality Act 2010 Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Trade Union consultation on the policy and its implementation.
Impact: The policy details everyone's responsibility to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behave in ways that uphold the College's Vision and Values, this Equality and Diversity policy and the policies and procedures associated with it. Speak out or report any breaches of the policy. Think about and understand how their own assumptions and prejudices affect the way they behave towards others and then act appropriately. 	

Part 3. Identifying Impact on Protected Characteristics

Protected Characteristic	Age	Disability	Gender Reassignment	Marriage/Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and maternity	Race	Religion or belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
Impact Identified: - Positive (P) - Negative (N) - Neutral Impact (N/I)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P

Part 4. Action & Outcome (Following initial assessment, describe any action that will be taken to address impact detected)

No action required.

Sign-off, authorisation and publishing *	
Name:	Kimra Donnelly
Position:	Director of People Services
Date of original EIA	September 2015
Date EIA last reviewed	April 2022

**Please note that an electronic sign-off is sufficient*