

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

HARROW, RICHMOND AND UXBRIDGE COLLEGES POLICY AND PROCEDURES



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Person responsible:	Assistant Principal - Workplace and Employability Skills
Approved by:	Curriculum and Quality Board and Governors
For action by:	All staff and learners
For information to:	All staff and learners

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 Harrow, Richmond and Uxbridge College (HRUC, the College) places its learners and staff at the heart of everything it does, and we are mindful of the diverse needs of those we work with.
- 1.2 The ethos and philosophy of HRUC is to turn equality intent into equality action and to demonstrate this commitment in all that we do. We will ensure we remain a College that serves the community with our values and commitments to Equality, Diversity & Inclusion and Human Rights at the heart of our operation. This means listening to and understanding people's views, creating a working environment where everyone is treated with respect and able to contribute fully. And it means making sure everyone feels included and valued for what they bring to the organisation.
- 1.3 HRUC aims to create an environment where all individuals have the opportunity to achieve their full potential. HRUC is opposed to all forms of inequality and discrimination. All individuals should treat each other with mutual respect.
- 1.4 The duty towards Equality does not require public bodies to treat everyone the same. Rather, it requires public bodies to think about people's different needs and how these can be met.

1.5 We believe:

- Diverse teams make better decisions and produce richer experiences
- Listening to different points-of-view improves how we operate
- Valuing our differences, as well as highlighting those which we have in common, strengthens inclusion
- We respect all members of the College community
- We believe in the value of each individual
- We accept our changing responsibilities to the local and wider community
- We value mutual respect, honesty, integrity and personal accountability

1.6 The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) policy underpins our values at HRUC. The College is proud of its diverse community and takes opportunities to celebrate, educate and value the differences between individuals within the whole college, local and wider community.

1.7 In order to further the aims of the general equality duty, the College will adopt the following overarching equality objective:

Celebrate and strengthen diversity while improving inclusion across learner and staff communities. Foster an environment of access and inclusion while celebrating HRUC's diversity.

2. Scope

2.1 The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion policy is for all parties who operate in and with HRUC. These include (but are not limited to):

- Learners
- Staff
- Parent / Guardians
- Governors
- Third party companies working with HRUC
- Stake holders
- Visitors

2.2 The Corporation of HRUC has an ultimate role in approving, championing, promoting and monitoring the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy.

2.3 The following groups and post-holders have responsibilities for the development and implementation of policies relating to equality and diversity for staff and learners.

2.4 The College Principals are responsible for managing HRUC's committees and boards to ensure compliance with legislation. They are responsible for ensuring that the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy is implemented in all aspects of its work. Related to this Strategy is the HRUC Mental Health Strategy and Mental Capacity Act Procedure.

2.5 The College will ensure there are designated senior officers with responsibility for equality and diversity for learners at HRUC. The post holders will be responsible for raising Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

awareness of equality and diversity procedures and practices among the learner body across the three Colleges.

- 2.6 College Managers (Heads of School/Managers) are responsible for implementing the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy in relation to staff and learners in their curriculum School/service area.
- 2.7 The Chief People Officer is the designated senior officer with responsibility for equality and diversity for staff at HRUC. The People and Organisational Development (POD) department is responsible for formulating, monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the Equality and Diversity Policy in respect of staff and for raising awareness of equality and diversity procedures and practices among the staff.
- 2.8 The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee have responsibility for monitoring equality and diversity practices across HRUC to provide guidance to staff and learners on equality and diversity matters and to complete regular reviews and update of their Equality and Diversity activities.
- 2.9 Every staff member has an implied duty under their contract of employment to comply with the requirements of this policy. In addition, teaching staff and tutors will create a classroom environment where all learners can thrive together and understand that individual characteristics make people unique and not 'different' in a negative way.
- 2.10 Teachers and tutors will work with HoS to provide opportunities within Schemes of Work to promote EDI. They will provide wherever possible, a diverse range of learning opportunities to facilitate access and achievement for the whole community.
- 2.11 Every learner has an implied duty under the respective Learner Charter and Code of Conduct to comply with the requirements of this policy.
- 2.12 Any individuals or organisations contracted within HRUC have an implied duty under their contract of employment to comply with the requirements of this policy.
- 2.13 Any learners and staff working on placement outside HRUC will be asked to understand the policy requirements of that organisation, whilst ensuring they comply with this policy. HRUC will check that organisations who have learners and staff on extended work placement at their premises seek to comply with HRUC's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy.
- 2.14 HRUC will challenge all forms of inequality, discrimination and harassment, and actively promote opportunities for the groups mentioned in 1.1 and foster good relations between them. This work is regarded as the responsibility of all staff in HRUC.
- 2.15 Any action which contravenes this policy renders individuals employed by HRUC or learners liable for disciplinary action. Evidence of discrimination or harassment may be considered as gross misconduct. Clients or contractors who contravene the policy can expect appropriate action.

3. Background

3.1 Equality Act 2010

3.2 The Equality Act 2010 ([Equality Act 2010 Guidance](#)) provides protection from discrimination in respect of particular “protected characteristics” which are defined as:

- age
- gender reassignment
- being married or in a civil partnership
- being pregnant or on maternity leave ([Pregnant employees' rights - GOV.UK](#))
- disability (<https://www.gov.uk/definition-of-disability-under-equality-act-2010>)
- race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

3.3 The Act also protects against discrimination by association and perception, e.g. a partner or carer of someone with a protected characteristic should also be protected from discrimination and harassment.

3.4 Furthermore, HRUC recognises and extends this policy to include, socio-economic status, deprivation, homelessness, unemployment, asylum and refugee status or membership of a trade union, or for any other identifiable cause protected by law.

3.5 Under the Equality Act 2010, public sector organisations, such as Colleges, are also covered by the Public Sector Equality Duty ([PSED legislation](#)) and must have due regard to the need to:

- I. Eliminate discrimination, harassment & victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- II. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
- III. Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

3.6 HRUC must have due regard to these duties in the carrying out of its functions. Having due regard means consciously thinking about the three aims of the general duty as part of the process of decision-making.

3.7 For example, having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity involves considering the need to:

- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics;
- meet the needs of people with protected characteristics; and
- encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is low.

- 3.8 Fostering good relations involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people who share a protected characteristic and others.

4. Specific duties

- 4.1 The Public Sector specific duty requires all public bodies to publish information to demonstrate the extent to which it furthered the aims of the general equality duty.
- 4.2 Subsequent information must be published at least annually.
- 4.3 The regulations require public bodies to:
- I. Publish equality objectives every four years.
 - II. Publish information annually to demonstrate their compliance with the general Equality Duty.
 - III. Publish information relating to their employees (for bodies with 150 or more staff) and others affected by their policies and practices (such as service users, e.g. learners).
- 4.4 All information must be published in a way that is accessible to the public.
- 4.5 HRUC will uphold its public sector duty as outlined above and actively seek to ensure that both learners and staff experience equality of opportunity and are free from harassment, discrimination or victimisation of any kind, regarding the protected characteristics. HRUC objectives will be published each year alongside an Annual Equality Report on the college websites.

5. Intent

- 5.1 Through its recruitment, selection and admission procedures, HRUC will seek to ensure that it supports equality and diversity in all aspects of education and employment, so that the learner body, workforce and Corporation reflect the diversity of the communities we serve.
- 5.2 HRUC will seek to achieve equality for all learners and to engage all learners, irrespective of their cultural background in all aspects of teaching, learning and support. It is committed to the attempt to 'narrow the gap' where learners from one diversity strand achieve less well than those from other strands.
- 5.3 HRUC is committed to achieving equality for all staff in training, career development, promotion and reward, and will support staff to help them maximise opportunities to promote equality and diversity.
- 5.4 Any form of unfair discrimination against learners or staff will be tackled effectively and with the aim of preventing such discrimination from occurring again in future.
- 5.5 Teaching materials and methods, and all forms of general communication with learners will strive to be sensitive to different cultures and will seek to promote Equality and Diversity and foster good relations between people from different groups.

- 5.6 HRUC will support where possible efforts to rehabilitate ex-offenders. However, HRUC reserves the right to refuse such applications where it is concluded that admitting the individual concerned poses a danger to other learners or staff or an unacceptable level of corporate risk. Applications to College courses from ex-offenders will be considered via a review panel making recommendations to the Principal of each College.
- 5.7 Opportunities will be sought to extend the influence of HRUC's Equality and Diversity good practice to parents, Higher Education institutions and other partner organisations, employers with whom we work, the local community, and the FE sector generally.

6. Implementation

- 6.1 Implementing equal opportunities is an ongoing process that will be regularly reviewed by HRUC's Senior Leadership Teams and the Equality and Diversity Forum/Committee.
 - 6.2 All staff will be made aware of the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy during the induction process. Additional training will also be conducted for staff during whole College training days.
 - 6.3 HRUC will produce an annual Equality and Diversity Action Plan to support the development and provision of equality and diversity. The action plan will be monitored by the EDI Committee.
 - 6.4 The Senior Leadership Teams will review all policies and procedures to ensure that a commitment to equality and diversity is continually evident. Equality Impact Assessments may be conducted on key strategic documents and projects and policies related to learners and Human Resources at the time of their revision.
 - 6.5 College marketing and support materials will seek to encourage applications and enquiries from all areas of the community, reflecting the ethos of this Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy.
 - 6.6 Core prospectus information will be provided in alternative formats on request.
 - 6.7 HRUC aims to provide support services during enrolment and on programme to help in the identification of additional learner support needs where necessary.
 - 6.8 Equality and Diversity training, advice and guidance and support will be provided to ensure that all staff, learners understand their duties and obligations in law.
 - 6.9 HRUC will protect the confidentiality of disclosure of sensitive matters related to equality and diversity. If information needs to be shared, for example on the grounds of health and safety or criminal law, care will be taken to share only what is necessary and to record what was shared, with whom, and why.
 - 6.10 HRUC will neither promote, nor permit the promotion of any one religious faith or culture.
 - 6.11 All individuals will be expected to adhere to College policies, rules and regulations, regardless of their personal faith or religion. Whilst HRUC resources exist primarily for the delivery of learning activities; arrangements will be made, where this is practicable, for
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staff or learners to carry out essential religious observance. Dedicated facilities cannot be provided for particular faith groups. It will be at the discretion of HRUC whether lettings arrangements can be entered into with external faith-based organisations. Arrangements will not be entered into where such an organisation seeks to promote others to its cause and where the event or activity is barred to those of different faiths or no faith.

- 6.12 Staff who believe they have not been treated in accordance with the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy may wish to make a complaint. This may be made either informally or formally in accordance with the Human Resources Policies and Procedures.
- 6.13 HRUC will consider it to be a disciplinary offence under this Policy if any employee makes a false accusation against another employee regarding an alleged breach of the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy.
- 6.14 Learners who believe they have not been treated in accordance with the Equality and Diversity Policy may wish to make a complaint. This may be either informally or formally in accordance with HRUC's Complaints Policy.
- 6.15 The Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of School / (Senior) Curriculum Managers are responsible for dealing with complaints under this Policy. While it may be appropriate to deal with a complaint informally, it must be noted that any breach of the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy may be grounds for disciplinary action under the Learner/Staff Code of Conduct and Learner/Staff Disciplinary/Capability Policy.

7. Impact

- 7.1 HRUC will conduct comprehensive and effective monitoring of all aspects of the Policy, both on an ongoing basis and as education and employment policies and practices change. Benchmarking data will be sought for monitoring gender, ethnicity, age and disability.
- 7.2 The Senior Leadership Teams will receive data which will inform the planning process and the implementation of this Policy.
- 7.3 Monitoring will be undertaken in accordance with best practice recommendations, particularly from the following bodies:
 - OFSTED; the Association of Colleges; and
 - The Equality and Human Rights Commission
- 7.4 HRUC will monitor the implementation of this Policy as part of annual training activities, through staff and learner focus groups and staff exit interviews.
- 7.5 HRUC will publish the Annual Equality Report on our website, and update its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan annually.
- 7.6 Publishing relevant equality information will make the College transparent about its decision-making processes, and accountable to their service users. Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity involves considering the need to:

- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics;
- meet the needs of people with protected characteristics; and
- encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is low.

8. Annual Equality Report (AER)

8.1 The College will publish annually data pertaining to the Equality Duty Act 2010. This will be a collation of qualitative and quantitative data made available to the College. This could include (but not limited to) the following:

- Recruitment, retention, achievement and success.
- Attendance
- Enrichment
- Progression
- Learner satisfaction
- Change management
- Staff profile
- Staff development
- Socio-economic profile
- Learner profile against the nine protected characteristics

8.2 The annual report on equality and diversity matters will be prepared and submitted to the Corporation each year prior to publication on the website ([EDI Annual Reports](#)).

8.3 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan

8.4 The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan:

- provides an overview of the College's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion objectives and identified priorities
- links actions to the relevant requirement of the Equality Duty
- lists the key actions required to achieve our objectives
- identifies who is responsible
- suggests a timeframe for completion
- highlights the criteria that will tell us whether we've succeeded
- highlights the progress made and what else needs to be done

9. Promotion of Equality and Diversity

9.1 HRUC will promote its equality and diversity policies and practices to staff through training, development and the induction programme for new staff.

9.2 All learners will receive a briefing on equality and diversity during induction. Additional guidance will be available through HRUC's tutorial programme.

9.3 Copies of this policy will be made available on College websites and intranets.

- 9.4 Information on learners and staff at HRUC will be made available on College websites and intranets, in line with the Public Sector Specific duties deriving from the Equality Act 2010.
- 9.5 HRUC will set, publish (on its websites) and evaluate equality objectives in line with the Public Sector Specific duties.
- 9.6 All College Policies will be required to promote and make appropriate reference to equality and diversity matters where appropriate.

10. Freedom of Expression

- 10.1 The College is committed to upholding the fundamental right to freedom of expression within the boundaries of the law. We recognise that open, respectful debate and the exchange of diverse ideas are essential to academic enquiry, personal development, and the functioning of a democratic society.
- 10.2 In line with our obligations under the Education (No. 2) Act 1986, the Human Rights Act 1998, and the Office for Students' Condition of Registration E2, we will take all reasonable steps to ensure that staff, students, and visiting speakers are able to express lawful views and opinions—even where those views may be controversial, challenging, or unpopular—without fear of censorship or adverse consequences.
- 10.3 At the same time, this freedom is exercised in the context of our duties to ensure a learning and working environment that is inclusive, respectful, and free from unlawful discrimination, harassment, or incitement to hatred. Freedom of expression does not extend to speech or conduct that is unlawful, including that which incites violence, hatred, or discrimination against protected groups.
- 10.4 This principle applies across all areas of the College's work in both Further and Higher Education, and in all forms of communication, including digital and social media. Where tensions arise between freedom of expression and our EDI values, the College will seek to uphold both rights in a balanced, proportionate, and lawful manner.

11. Review

- 11.1 This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis in accordance with legislative and educational developments.

12. Associated documents

- 12.1 The policy is supplemented by other policies such as:
- Anti-Bullying Policy & Procedure
 - Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
 - Mental Health Strategy
 - Data Protection Policies
 - Gender Identity Policy

13. Appendix A

13.1 Statement on Religious Diversity

13.2 HRUC celebrates and values the diversity brought by its individual members and aims to create an environment where religious beliefs are welcomed and respected. HRUC does not, as an institution, have any religious affiliation or endorse any particular denomination or faith.

13.3 HRUC recognises the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. The right to manifest beliefs is qualified by the need to protect the rights and freedoms of others. The Equality Act 2010 protects against discrimination on the grounds of religion and belief. This legislation also covers non-belief. HRUC recognises its Equality Duty as part of the Equality Act which requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, 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; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

13.4 Therefore, we are committed to treating all individuals equally and, accordingly, HRUC respects all faiths equally and will therefore neither promote, nor permit the promoting of, any one religious faith or culture over any other. All individuals will be expected to respect and adhere to College policies, rules and regulations, regardless of their personal faith or religion.

13.5 College resources exist primarily for the delivery of learning activities, but where practicable, arrangements will be made for people to carry out religious or faith observance, or to provide space for spiritual reflection.

13.6 Guidance Notes

13.7 The statement on Religious Diversity is intended to be an all-embracing description of HRUC's position and of its determination to respect the religious obligations of individuals whilst maintaining a cohesive College environment.

13.8 HRUC:

1. Promotes itself as a secular college and respects equally different religions, faiths, and cultures.
2. Expects everyone to adhere to the Equality & Diversity policy.
3. Expects regular course attendance from all its learners as outlined in the Attendance & Punctuality Policy.
4. Recognises a variety of religious festivals throughout the year.
5. As curriculum planning and learner success take priority at HRUC, the College asks that requests for exceptional leave for essential religious obligations are made by learners in writing to their Head of School at least one week in advance. Two days authorised absence is allocated for each academic year.

6. Delegates authority to Assistant Principals to grant permission to learners to take exceptional leave.
7. Requires Assistant Principals to ensure that the learner's exceptional leave is recorded and logged in their office.
8. Provides a variety of meals in Refectories, including vegetarian options, to reflect cultural diversity.
9. Endeavours to arrange refectory opening times which are sensitive to the religious obligations of users.
10. Provides where possible facilities for faith observance and ensures that a variety of means are used to publicise this provision (see quiet/reflection room below).
11. Expects all users to respect College resources where they are used for faith observance.
12. Provides the facility for staff to take annual leave, the exigencies of the service permitting, to fulfil their religious obligations.

13.9 Quiet/Reflection room

- 13.10 A Quiet/Reflection room is made available at certain times of the day when timetabling and room utilisation allow. The primary purpose of HRUC is education and therefore HRUC cannot guarantee this availability. This room can be used as a 'quiet' space by people of all faith groups, beliefs, genders and for those whom religion has no particular significance in their lives. The room may equally be used as a quiet space for people to sit and contemplate, to pray or to take a few moments to de-stress from a busy day.
- 13.11 HRUC will publicise the regular times and days of this room. If a learner wishes to use a room outside of these times, then he/she can request a room from the main reception. The management of this quiet/reflection room will be through an oversight committee existing of the Head of Security and Assistant Principal. The oversight committee will be responsible for managing the appropriate use of this facility and for dealing with any issues arising.
- 13.12 The room should be a safe space for all users. This means that everyone has a duty to respect other users and to ensure the environment remains welcoming to people of all faiths, beliefs, genders, and for those whom religion has no particular significance in their lives. The oversight committee reserves the right to refuse entry or cease any activity if it believes there is likelihood of a breach of this respect or HRUC's code of conduct.