

Responding to Diversity, Raising Standards, Taking Education Further.

**City College Coventry
Gender Equality Scheme
2006-2009**

April 2007

**Views Of Individuals Concerning Equality
(VOICE)**

This is City College Coventry's Gender Equality Scheme (GES).

It is proposed that the college move towards a Single Equality Scheme that includes Race, Disability and Gender. The college is still legally obliged to retain its Race Equality Policy. The Single Equality scheme will eventually encompass and integrate all strands of Equality and Diversity with action points relating to each strand clearly identified, and monitoring of all areas that may be subject to disadvantage. People with disabilities are actively involved in the Disability related issues and those of differing racial and gender backgrounds are consulted as part of the process.

City College currently has an Equality and Diversity strategy group who meet to discuss policy issues and VOICE (Views Of Individuals Concerning Equality) groups that include staff and students from a variety of schools across the college, and may include those from partner organisations. VOICE groups will focus on Disability, Race, Gender, Age and Culture but are open to anyone who has an interest in educating others, organising events or learning about these areas.

Training and Development events are taking place in schools and support areas across college to raise awareness, elicit views and recruit members for VOICE. These training events will be extended to learners, as is the opportunity to belong to VOICE.

If you would like to attend one of these events please contact Jude Tymon below. Please note that this document can be made available in a number of formats on request,

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City College recognises that demographics relating to both students and staff are constantly altering and that we must be responsive and flexible to these changes.

Until 1970 it was lawful to pay women less than men

In 1975

Women could be sacked for being pregnant or getting married

Men spent less than 15 minutes a day with their children

58% of FE students were men

Since then:

Fathers' time with children has grown 8-fold

Attitudes to men's and women's roles transformed

Many more women have accessed FE (men also) – 59% now women

But..

Part time pay gap almost unchanged at 38% (Full time much reduced)

Women pensioners' income is less than two-thirds of men

44% of pregnant women face discrimination at work

Girls and boys are channelled into a highly segregated workforce, where men hold most senior roles

Transgender people will be covered within employment, FE and HE issues from April 2007 and for goods and services from December 2007.

Economic sustainability will require a fresh approach to employment. Not only do we have to get used to the idea of working later into our lives, but will also mean employers recognising and enabling the potential of the entire population; removing the physical and social barriers to participation in employment for all. Diverse workforces have been proven to be more innovative and therefore more competitive. As a college we are responsible for educating not only our student body, but also our partner employers to recognise these issues and respond to that diversity.

1. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to City College's Gender Equality Scheme.

The Gender Equality Duty

The new duty on public authorities to produce and implement a Gender Equality Scheme comes into force on 6th April 2007.

The aim of the duty is to enable public authorities to ensure that their functions and activities lead to real outcomes and practical improvements in the day-to day life and experience of disabled people. This process is built around the responsibility of Public Sector Organisations to:

- Promote Equality of Opportunity between women and men
- Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful

Instead of depending on individuals making complaints about sex discrimination, the duty places the legal responsibility on **public authorities** to demonstrate that they treat men and women fairly. The duty will affect policy making, the way in which we deliver our courses, and employment practices such as recruitment and flexible working. This is different from the current arrangements as now the onus will be on organisations to promote equality, rather than on individuals to highlight discrimination.

As an education provider we are required to outline how we will address the objectives listed above through the publication of a Gender Equality Scheme (GES) (by 30th April 2007). The GES is intended to provide a practical and proportionate plan of action to ensure that all functions of an organisation consider Gender Equality in the planning, development and operation of its functions.

As an FE provider we are subject to specific duties:

- To set and implement gender equality objectives published in a scheme and action plan.
- To consider objectives on gender pay gap
 - In order to set those objectives:
 - Gather and use information on how your work affects gender equality.
 - Consult relevant stakeholders
 - Gender impact assessment of all policies and practices – new and existing (the impact assessment process will be built into the current policy review procedure)
 - Report annually and review every three years

Service provision and curriculum issues

Do our policies, curriculum and services meet the different needs of women and men? We are required to look at who uses the College, and ask questions like:

- What are the different issues and priorities for women and men who attend our courses or use our facilities?
- Do they have different requirements and needs that we need to meet?
- Will women or men be put off using a service because of lack of childcare or an unsafe or unwelcoming environment?

For example, if a young mother attends college on a plumbing course, she may not be able to take the course if the childcare at the college does not open until 9am, but her course starts at 8am. The college may not have taken into account the needs of students with caring responsibilities, particularly in this case as plumbing is likely to be a male dominated course. This could also affect men, as they too may benefit from the childcare facilities

- Are there some services which are more effectively delivered as women-only or men-only?

If there is enough evidence to show that services are needed for men-only or women-only. It will still be legal to provide single sex services, where there is a clear need to preserve decency or privacy, such as a women's refuge

Employment issues

We are also required to look at our **employment policies** to see how they affect women and men. Some gender issues that we will have to think about are:

- Is there a pay gap between men and women doing the same job or jobs of similar value?
- How could flexible working help staff and how will it benefit men and women?
- How do we recruit staff and are we likely to get a good gender balance of candidates?
- Do we have a gender imbalance?
- If so, how could we try and rectify the situation?
- Do we have a good return rate from maternity leave?
- If not, why and how can we improve?

Transgender issues

Public authorities will also need to look at how their employment policies affect transsexual men and women. Some issues they may have to think about are:

Does our Equal Opportunities policy and harassment policy cover transgender people?

Do our practices and procedures support the dignity and privacy of transgender people?

For instance, when an organisation requests identification from employees, does it restrict it to items such as birth certificates? If so, a transgender person may have to inadvertently reveal their original sex to us against their wishes as they may not have been able to obtain a corrected birth certificate

Do we have a policy on supporting employees who are undergoing gender reassignment?

For example, do we have a system to support existing staff who intend to "transition" whilst at work? Have you thought about the issues this could raise?

Do we encourage job applications from the transgender community?

For instance, have we got policies and procedures that would put obstacles in the path of prospective employees who may want to work for you

Developing the gender equality scheme

As with the Race Equality Policy and the Disability Equality Scheme we will need to:

- consult employees, our students and the trade unions
- take the information gathered into account
- develop plans to make any necessary improvements identified by the above processes

PLUS

- consider the need to have to make arrangements to address any concerns including any gender pay gap

City College Coventry - Strategic Objectives and external drivers

Our mission statement clearly sets out that we are committed to offering education within a culture which values and celebrates the differences of the people in our local, national and international communities.

“To respond to the diverse educational needs of our learners, to raise continuously the standard of our education and training services, and to take education further into our business and social communities.”

We are driven by the local and national LSC (Learning and Skills Council) agenda including Measures of Success and the emerging Framework for Excellence that builds on these measures. The LSC’s Annual statement of priorities and the local skills gaps will inform our curriculum offer. The regional LSC EDIMs will play a part in forming our own priorities and are generally as follows:

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1. Improve parity of participation among 16-19 yr old learners who are under-represented
2. Improve success rates among groups of learners where rates are below national benchmark
3. Increase the number of older workers (45+) benefiting from training designed to upskill and reskill thus enabling participants to continue to be economically active
4. Address imbalances on FE and WBL programmes in occupational sectors
5. Reduce the percentage of ‘unknowns’ in WBL and FE individualised ILRs
6. Improve the destination data recorded in ILRs in WBL and FE

The Scheme

Our Gender Equality Scheme is one of an emerging set of schemes and targeted action plans to promote different elements of Equality and Diversity throughout our functions. These other strands include, race and disability. We recognise that all these strands are interconnected and, at a strategic level we approach Equality and Diversity from a holistic perspective. However, these single strand action plans enable us to develop a targeted evaluation and monitoring process for individual elements of Equality and Diversity policy until embedded. This approach enables us to see where our interventions are having most impact and improve our performance where necessary.

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Process

The primary function of the EIA should be to determine the extent of differential impact upon the relevant groups and in turn whether that impact has a negative impact on groups or individuals in relation to one or more of the equality categories (gender, disability, sexual orientation, age, religious belief and transgendered and transsexual people). In the light of this assessment, if it is decided that the project, policy or project is not effectively achieving the promotion of equality of opportunity, then measures will be employed to mitigate the adverse impact.

To assess the impact of a proposed project, policy or function it is important to have as much knowledge as possible about how the proposed activity will affect people. How this is assessed will depend on the nature of the activity itself but will include some of the following:

- ***Demographic data and other statistics***
- ***Available research findings***
- ***Comparisons between related policies***
- ***Survey data***
- ***Equality monitoring data***
- ***One off data gathering exercises***

The next section outlines the three levels of EIA that the college will adhere to:

Initial Assessment/Screening

It must be remembered that which ever level is undertaken, it must be **proportionate** to the likely impact of the item under consideration. The more **substantial** the impact on the community the more in-depth the EIA will be.

The Initial Assessment or screening

All policies and procedures will be screened at organisational and school level for their impact on student and staff.

This will play a valuable role in new project, policy or function formulation, or when reviewing an existing project, policy or function and will be carried out in all cases. It is effectively a tool for deciding whether or not the project, policy or function needs a more in depth analysis. The main difference between the initial assessment/screening and a full EIA is that it is based on what information we already have/what we already know in relation to the policy and will identify where more information is needed.

Full EIA

The Full EIA will be undertaken if the Initial Assessment points to the possibility of unjustifiable differential impact on relevant groups. The full EIA will be expanded in light of formal consultation, further research and data collection and further analysis. It will also state clear recommendations as to what changes or amendments have occurred to the project, policy or function in light of the EIA.

A full EIA should be undertaken as listed below:

1. Identify the aims of the project, policy or function and how it is to be implemented
2. Consideration of relevant data and research
3. Assessment of impacts
4. Consideration of measures
5. Formal consultation on the actual impact of existing projects, policies or functions and the likely impact of proposed activities
6. Make a decision in the light of data, possible alternatives and consultation
7. Monitoring for adverse impact in the future and publication of the results of such monitoring
8. Publication of results of the Equality Impact Assessments

Action Plan Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The Gender Equality Scheme and Action Plan will be formally reviewed every three years, although action plans will be reviewed on an annual basis to update any changes as a result of the continuous monitoring process.

The individual action plans which underpin this scheme will have monitoring systems attached so they can be measured for effectiveness.

The Equality and Diversity group will ensure that work is progressed in each of the areas set out in the Action Plans.

The Executive and Governors will both receive regular progress on this work to be reported so they can ensure ongoing adherence to the legislation.

Building Accessibility Action Plans

Processes and consultation followed for the Swanswell development include the Equality and Diversity group who met with the architect on several occasions and the VOICE groups who have input their ideas at the planning stages with the College Project manager, and will continue to do so throughout the build and will be able to offer consultancy expertise to future Swanswell area developments.

Training

The Diversity Manager has responsibility for our organisational approach to all equality training. In reviewing and developing training we will take into consideration:

- Diversity and equality training to be a consistent and mandatory part of induction for all staff. All new staff will meet the diversity manager and will be offered a chance to disclose a disability if they have not previously felt able to and offered a mentor appropriate to their needs if requested.
- Training/learning to encompass all staff irrespective of position, contracted hours or nature of contract.
- Management training to ensure that staff meet required standards.
- To establish clear links to other diversity elements and in areas of health and safety, and human resources.
- Diversity and Equality awareness or learning and development needs considered through a Performance Appraisal scheme.

Leadership and ownership of the GES

The key driver to the achievement of the actions contained in this Gender Equality Scheme is the leadership and ownership of the scheme at Corporation and Executive level.

Complaints Procedure

We have grievance and disciplinary procedures in place and a policy on dealing with complaints of harassment relating to employees and students.

We also have a 'whistle-blowing' procedure, which extends the protection for employees who want to report bad practice without fear of being victimised as a result.

We will take all complaints seriously and will not tolerate any form of discriminatory behaviour.

Monitoring complaints is also another way of gathering information to see whether we are meeting our equality duties.

Corporate Functions – These are the functions of running the ‘day to day business’ of being a college they include:

- Human Resources/Personnel
- Learner Support
- Estates
- Student services
- Marketing
- Finance/admin support
- Curriculum
- Quality assurance embedded into each of the above area

