

Gender Equality Scheme and Action Plan



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Part 1 - Introduction and foreword

The Gender Equality Scheme came into force in April 2007 and requires us as a public sector organisation to promote gender equality and eliminate discrimination. We have a responsibility to demonstrate that we treat people fairly. The college values this opportunity to assess its current position in relation to gender equality and to put in place a scheme that will ensure we consider gender in all aspects of college life.

Gender refers to the wider social roles and relationships that make up the lives of men and women. Gender inequality continues to exist in spite of the legal requirements of the Sex Discrimination Act. This scheme will also consider the elimination of discrimination against transsexual people.

Our specific duties within the scheme are as follows:

1. To prepare and publish a gender equality scheme showing how we will meet its general and specific duties
2. To develop, publish and monitor equal pay policies including objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gap
3. To gather and use information on how our policies and practices affect gender equality in employment and within the provision of services
4. To consult stakeholders to determine our gender equality objectives
5. To assess the impact of our current policies and practices on gender equality
6. To implement the actions identified in the scheme within three years
7. To report on the scheme annually and to review the scheme at least every three years

The scope of this scheme will include the following groups of people:

- learners who currently are enrolled on Kendal College courses delivered on the college campus or delivered in the college name in the workplace or through one of our partner providers
- Staff employed by the college or who work on behalf of the college
- Visitors to the college, in particular those who access our services including the college restaurant, salons or conference facilities
- The wider community who currently do not use the college

Through the scheme, we will have as our main objectives the following key themes:

- Better informed decision making and policy development
- A clearer understanding of the needs of our users – staff, students and visitors
- Better quality services that meet varied needs
- Better promotion of opportunities
- More effective use of talent in the workforce

It will be the intention of the college to ensure these key themes are integrated into every facet of college life and will be monitored as part of the college quality cycle of self-assessment and included within the college strategic plan.

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Part 2 – Vision, Values and Principles

Embedding gender equality into the college necessitates a whole-college approach and it will be our responsibility to ensure we become agents of change and set an example within our local community.

To do this we have considered the following factors:

Involving staff at a senior level – Equality and Diversity is a fixed agenda item on the Senior Leadership & Management team monthly agenda. Strategic responsibility for equality and diversity lies with a senior manager and there are clear links into other key agenda such as Disability Equality and Skills for Life.

Identifying and sharing a clear vision – staff development, inclusion within self assessment and lesson observation are all ways in which the vision of gender equality is being cascaded around the college and its staff. Within the timescale of the scheme, there will be an emphasis on ensuring that gender equality is fully embedded within all college activities.

Selling the benefits of gender equality – Presentations are given to curriculum and support staff through team meetings, staff development events and a staff briefing sheet is available and distributed widely to show easy ways in which staff can be more aware of gender equality and how they can support the scheme. Equality and diversity is a module of the new staff induction programme.

Involving staff in the change process – there are two main elements of change that will involve staff across the college. The first is through ensuring equal pay and employment opportunities for lecturing and support staff and the second is through curriculum development.

Part 3 – Engaging with Stakeholders

Engaging with stakeholders is a legal requirement of the duty and as such we will ensure that we comply with this requirement. However, the true benefits of involving staff and services users are the level of expertise that can be applied to what we do. Barriers to learning, employment and access through gender can only be truly dismantled through a clear understanding of what they are, why they are there and the best way of removing them that can only come from the very people who face them.

An action of high priority for the college will be to develop the genuine and active involvement of staff and students through consultation. Through our action plan, we will seek to find partners who can share decision-making with us to shape our actions and outcomes towards our shared vision. This will include the involvement of staff and students in:

- Carrying out impact assessments
- Identifying the barriers faced by people using Kendal College
- Monitoring the action plan

The college has taken a number of steps already towards engaging with stakeholders and will continue to seek new involvement and partnerships.

Equality and Diversity Forum – this group meets termly and includes students, staff and representatives from a number of local community groups including WorkBase, Oaklea Trust, Holehird, Cumbria Deaf Association, South Lakes Society for the Blind. Wider membership continues to be sought so that different learners and their needs are represented. To support gender equality, trade union representation will be included.

College staff – the procedure for annual appraisal and target setting includes discussion with the staff member of changes to their personal/physical well being and barriers they might be facing. This will hopefully lead to a higher rate of disclosure of concerns over any identified discriminatory practice and an action will be needed to develop the skills of line managers to encourage disclosure.

In all our plans to involve more people in our decision-making processes, we will be aware of “involvement fatigue” and ensure that their involvement is focussed and worthwhile with clear outcomes that benefit the participants.

Part 4 – Leadership and Management

Senior Leadership & Management Team

There is serious and committed support from the college Senior Leadership and Management team to the ethos of providing a first class service for our learners and staff and to breaking down the barriers that continue to exist.

The Head of Business Development and Client Services, Carole Drury, leads on the development of the Gender Equality Scheme and is supported on the Working Group by:

- Louise Shrapnel - Head of Finance, Personnel and Resources
- Brenda Brew – Head of School and Quality Manager
- Maggie Cawthorn – Head of School and Tutorial
- Paul Goodwin – Marketing Manager
- Steve Ingle – Head of Learner Services
- Donna Clarke - Unison

This working group was set up to support the development of the our different Equality Schemes and will exist until such time as it feels its remit is over, probably within one year of set up. Its terms of reference are:

- To agree the procedures and format of the college scheme
- To provide expertise in the identification of policies, procedures, plans and practices that will be prioritised for impact assessment
- To consider successes to date
- To promote the vision for gender equality across the college
- To identify training needs
- To link the Gender Equality Scheme in with other college initiatives such as quality, Disability Equality Scheme and Skills for Life

Every four weeks is SLMT Reporting Week and a regular agenda item is Equality and Diversity where a report is produced and discussed on progress of the college towards its Equality schemes and action plans.

This also includes monitoring of the equality and diversity impact measures (EDIMS) that are included with the college strategic plan.

Governance

It is the governing body that will have responsibility for approving the colleges Gender Equality Scheme. This will be through the Education, Personnel and Quality committee, chaired by Cath Dutton.

Part 5 – Carrying out Impact Assessments

The college holds a large number of policies and procedures relating to staff, the building, collection of data, personnel, student support services, financial regulations. It would be impossible to carry out impact assessment on each and every one for the benefit of learners, staff and visitors. In addition to this, there are an infinite number of practices that are not documented in this way.

The importance of impact assessment will use the following guide-lines:

- Identification of negative and differential impact
- How the impact can be eradicated or minimised
- Its contribution to all reported processes eg strategic planning, self assessment, staff and student feedback
- Inclusion within college “vocabulary”
- Help build the duty into decision making processes

Key questions from impact assessment will be:

- Does this policy/practice contribute to the goal of eliminating discrimination and achieving equality?
- If not, can it be adapted to do so and how should it be changed?

The working group has therefore taken the decision to sub-divide all college policies, practices, plans and procedures into families linked to the learner journey followed by other families relating to the premises and to personnel. The identified stages of the Learner Journey are as follows:

Stage 1 – Pre-entry

This stage starts with marketing and promotion of the college to its wider community. It includes, for example, the following:

- Prospectus
- Course information sheets including availability on the college web site
- Open days
- Schools liaison
- Admissions policy
- Guidance meetings and one-to-one interviews
- Range of learning styles and curriculum needs

Examples of changes we have already made at this stage include:

- Promotional materials and activities to include a greater emphasis on counter-gender stereotyping
- Web site development including more information on non-gender stereotyping and removal of barriers

Stage 2 – Enrolment

Important considerations at this stage of the learner journey include ensuring that there are no barriers in place for learners to enrol on a programme that has a classic gender bias. This also applies to transgender students.

- Enrolment paperwork and questions

- Disclosure
- Speed of setting up support
- Enrolment days
- Induction programmes
- Initial assessment and learning styles
- Being on the right programme

Stage 3 – On programme

Classroom delivery, monitoring progress, classroom facilities, student facilities and services and many others come into this section. Suggestions for prioritisation include:

- Lesson planning and schemes of work (to include differentiation)
- Key and basic skills
- Additional support and specialist equipment
- Welfare support including learner support fund, Educational Maintenance Allowance
- Bullying and harassment policies and support
- Marking policy
- Learning Centre and IT User Policy
- Attendance monitoring and withdrawal procedures
- Learner review and reporting
- Tutorial programme and careers guidance
- Educational visits and residential trips
- Work experience

Stage 4 – Moving On

Once the programme is complete, it is essential that students are provided with the skills to enable them to progress to the next stage be it into employment, onto Higher Education or progressing to the next level at college. Consideration will be given to these areas:

- UCAS application and personal statements
- Job references and help with application
- Exit interview

Personnel Procedures and Practices

Areas for prioritisation will include:

- Recruitment strategies
- Staff induction
- Appraisal and target setting
- Staff development
- Staff wellbeing
- Pay policies

Part 6 – Gathering Information

The key to setting realistic objectives and then being able to monitor them is to have good information that can be analysed and used to demonstrate improvement.

Data will be gathered relating to gender of both staff and students as follows:
Staff – broken down by role – teaching, support, management
Full and part time, employed on permanent, fixed term or agency contracts

Students – by curriculum and course, by age groups, by type of learning eg full time, part time, higher education, apprenticeship etc.

Once this data has been produced, the Equality Group will carry out an analysis of any emerging gaps in provision that will in turn lead to targets for improvement.

College questionnaires for staff and students will include questions based on gender and again these will be analysed for evidence of barriers or discriminatory practice.

Part 7 – Putting the Scheme into Practice

This scheme will be published in line with the deadline of 30th April 2007. The duration of the scheme is three years from that date and there will be an annual review in November of each year including a report to governors.

The scheme will be available on the college website at

www.kendal.ac.uk


Printed copies of the scheme will also be available from Student Services at Kendal College and can be obtained in person, by calling

01539 814700

Or emailing

enquiries@kendal.ac.uk

The action plan that supports our three year scheme will be reviewed by the Equality and Diversity Forum three times per year following updates on the achievement of milestone targets by the scheme working party.



This publication is also available in alternative formats on request,
such as braille, large print and pdf and is available
on the college's website at www.kendal.ac.uk