

Gender Equality Policy



ABERDEEN COLLEGE®



HR44

Gender Equality Policy

Review Date: April 2009

Introduction

Aberdeen College is committed to providing a learning environment free from sexual discrimination and recognises the important role education has to play in preparing people for life and employment.

The College recognises the importance of the duties laid upon it by the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and Equality Act 2006.

The College has made significant progress with gender equality as part of the general promotion of equality and diversity and has been involved in a wide range of activities designed to promote gender equality.

General Duties

The Equality Act 2006 introduces the Gender Equality Duty 2007 which requires public authorities to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment
- promote equality of opportunity between men and women

Specific Duties

The Act also introduces a number of specific duties for public authorities. These are:

- To prepare and publish a gender equality scheme showing how it will meet its general and specific duties and setting out its gender equality objectives;
- In formulating its overall objectives, to consider the need to include objectives to address the cause of any gender pay gap;
- To gather and use information on how its policies and practices affect gender equality in the workforce and in the delivery of services;
- To consult stakeholders (i.e. employees; service users and others, including trade unions) and take account of relevant information in order to determine its gender equality objectives;
- To assess the impact of its current and proposed policies and practices on gender equality;
- To implement the actions set out in its scheme within three years, unless it is unreasonable or impracticable to do so;

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- To report against the scheme every year and review the scheme at least every three years.

Impact Assessment

One of the specific duties under the Gender Equality Duty 2007 is to assess the impact of existing policies, practices and procedures in our core functions on students and staff from different gender and transgender groups.

The purpose of the assessment is to see whether policies help to achieve gender equality for students and staff from different gender and transgender groups or whether they have, or could have, an adverse impact on them.

The impact assessments will focus on those areas considered by the College to be relevant to gender equality.

Areas Relevant to Gender Equality

The College considers that the following areas are relevant to gender equality:

- The Curriculum – Learning and Teaching
- Access and Facilities
- Admissions Procedures
- Student Guidance and Support
- Staff Recruitment and Selection
- Staff Induction and Development
- Staff Retention and Flexibility
- Procurement and Outsourcing

The College will assess the impact of its policies on these functions in a number of ways. These will include:

- Publishing an annual gender equality action plan with objectives and targets which will be reviewed as part of the planning process;
- Monitoring a range of indicators by sex including: student recruitment, retention and achievement and staff recruitment, development and career progression.
- Conducting a Gender Impact Assessment.

Responsibilities for Gender Equality

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The College's Board of Management has the overall responsibility for ensuring that the College complies with the general and specific duties imposed by the Equalities Act 2006 and the Gender Equality Duty 2007.

The Board of Management is responsible for approving the Gender Equality Policy. Responsibility for implementing the Policy is delegated by the Board of Management to the Principal who will ensure that the College:

- Implements the Policy and annual Gender Equality Action Plans
- Provides training for all staff on sex equality and ensures that they are aware of their responsibilities
- Implements arrangements for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the Policy
- Implements arrangements to ensure that action is taken in relation to students or staff who act in a sexually discriminatory manner.

The College's Vice Principal and Director of Human Resource Management and Development will be responsible for developing, co-ordinating, disseminating, monitoring and reviewing the Policy. He/she will also chair the College's Equal Opportunities Committee and will provide professional advice and guidance to the management and staff of the College on equality and diversity issues.

Senior managers, heads of department and other managers are all responsible for ensuring that the Policy is implemented within their areas in relation to both staff and students.

All staff have a responsibility to:

- Attend training provided by the College on sex equality issues.
- Familiarise themselves with the requirements of this Policy
- Challenge sexual bias and stereotyping using established College procedures and channels of communication.

All students have a responsibility to respect the rights of others to be treated with dignity and respect and study in an environment free from the threat of sexual harassment, bullying or intimidation.

The Students' Association has a responsibility to promote this Policy and appropriate standards of behaviour within the student body.

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The College expects its students and staff to observe appropriate standards of behaviour and will use established disciplinary policies to take action against individuals who breach the Gender Equality Policy.

Equal Opportunities Committee

The College's Equal Opportunities Committee will comprise managers, staff and student representatives and will:

- Review the College's Equal Opportunities policies and procedures including the Gender Equality Policy;
- Identify best practice in promoting equality for men and women;
- Promote sex equality throughout the College;
- Encourage women and men who study and work in the College to participate in discussions and consultations on issues that have a direct effect on them.

Gender Equality Scheme

<u>Function</u>	<u>Actions</u>	<u>Priority</u>
Curriculum – Learning and Teaching	The content of the curriculum will be monitored to ensure there is no gender bias or stereotyping.	Annually by way of audit.
	Where appropriate, specific material on gender equality will be incorporated in programmes of learning.	Ongoing throughout academic year.
Curriculum – Learning and Teaching (cont)	The approaches of teaching staff will be free from bias and prejudice.	Observed through annual lesson observation and annual student satisfaction surveys.
	The College will ensure that external agencies with an interest in curriculum matters are advised of the provisions of the Gender Equality Policy.	Policy available to all partners.
	All assessment criteria and instruments of assessment will be designed and reviewed to ensure that they are not directly or indirectly discriminatory.	As part of internal and external moderation and verification process.

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<u>Function</u>	<u>Actions</u>	<u>Priority</u>
	All teaching staff will receive training in equal opportunities and gender equality.	Targets specified in annual operational plan.
	All curriculum teams will monitor enrolment, retention and achievement by sex as part of the annual review process and will identify and implement actions to address any issues arising.	Annually.
	Course committees will provide for representation of men and women to ensure the curriculum meets the needs of all students.	Ongoing throughout the academic year.
	Focus groups will be conducted to assess the impact of College policies on students	At least 6 will be conducted each academic year
Access and Facilities	College staff will ensure that advice and support provided to students on finding accommodation will take account of possible different requirements of men and women.	Accommodation Officer will ensure that this is covered in any information provided to students and in procedures followed.
Access and Facilities (cont)	<p>In all recruitment and publicity material it will be stated that Aberdeen College is an equal opportunities college, courses will be described in such a way that no suitably qualified person will be excluded from applying and any photographs or graphics will be designed and used in a way which does not reinforce stereotyping.</p> <p>Application forms will only include those questions which are necessary for selection for a course place and College approved monitoring forms will be included</p>	<p>Head of Publicity and Marketing will ensure that this is regularly reviewed.</p> <p>Associate Principal (Data Management and Student Administration) will review content of forms annually</p>
	Marketing will be targeted at under-represented groups i.e. women on construction,	Head of Publicity and Marketing will liaise with Heads to

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<u>Function</u>	<u>Actions</u>	<u>Priority</u>
	engineering and IT courses, men on childcare and care courses.	Department to identify under-represented groups.
	Applications, enrolments, retention and attainment will be analysed by gender	Monitoring information will be processed and produced annually for each department
	All admissions and reception staff will receive training in equal opportunities and gender equality	Targets specified in annual operational plan
Admissions Procedures	Entry qualifications will be consistent and essential to the requirements of courses and qualifications obtained in other countries will be properly assessed and equivalences with entry requirements established	Director of Learning and Teaching will review annually
	All staff involved in selection interviews will receive training in interview techniques, equal opportunities and sex equality and will provide feedback if requested.	Targets specified in annual operational plan
Student Guidance and Support	All guidance staff will be required to hold a recognised qualification in guidance	Targets specified in annual operational plan
	Guidance staff will be regularly briefed on the range of courses available and alternatives available from other providers	Head of Student Support Services will arrange annually as minimum
	Guidance staff will also be advised to encourage men and women to consider courses where they are under-represented i.e. women in construction, engineering and IT and men in care and childcare.	Head of Student Support Services will brief all guidance tutors and all new tutors.
Staff Recruitment and Selection	All managers involved in the recruitment and selection of staff will undertake equal opportunities and gender equality training	Staff Development Manager will arrange regular sessions as part of annual Staff Development Programme.
	Flexible and part-time working will be considered for employees with caring	HR Manager will consider all applications

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<u>Function</u>	<u>Actions</u>	<u>Priority</u>
	responsibilities at all levels in the College	
	Any barriers to the recruitment and retention of transsexual staff will be identified and removed	HR Manager will consult Heads of Department and prepare guidance notes in the first year
Staff Induction and Development	Women and men are represented at all levels of the workforce and in all areas of work.	Vice Principal (HR) will ensure that recruitment practices result in fair representation of men and women at all levels of the College - ongoing
	Employees will be made aware of the Gender Equality Duty, understand how it will affect their work, and have the skills to implement the duty in their work.	HR Manager will be responsible for briefing all new staff
Staff Induction and Development (cont)	Where there is a gender imbalance arising from staff qualifications and experience, positive action will be taken to minimise the gap between skills and encourage promotion.	HR Manager and Staff Development Manager will organise appropriate training and development annually
Staff Retention and Flexibility	Employees with caring responsibilities will receive appropriate support and advice.	HR Manager will deal with all requests for flexible working, part-time working, time off.
	All managers will receive training in the College's Dignity at Work Policy to ensure that any complaints of sexual harassment or bullying are dealt with promptly and effectively.	Vice Principal (HR) will run briefing sessions annually
	The College will implement "keep in touch" and "welcome back" sessions for women on maternity leave to encourage them to return to work and remain in employment	HR Manager will implement - ongoing
	The College will conduct an equal pay audit every three years to ensure that pay structures and practices are free from gender bias.	Vice Principal (HR) will arrange three yearly

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<u>Function</u>	<u>Actions</u>	<u>Priority</u>
	Guidance notes on the recruitment and retention of transsexual people will be prepared and issued to all managers.	HR Manager will prepare and distribute in the first year
	Flexible working options will be considered to assist with work-life balance	HR Manager will discuss options with staff as and when appropriate
	Health promotion information and absence reports will be analysed by gender to encourage increased participation in health screening.	HR Manager and Principal Occupational Health Nurse will arrange annual campaigns
Staff Retention and Flexibility (cont)	Leave of absence reports will be analysed by gender to establish gender bias with any relevant areas for development being discussed with the focus groups	HR Manager will provide monitoring information monthly
Procurement and Outsourcing	All contractors and potential contractors will be advised through the procurement process of the requirement for them to meet expected standards relating to gender equality.	Vice Principals will draw to the attention of contractors and brief contractors – as contracts are tendered.

Status: approved by:

Human Resource Committee

Date of version:

January 2008

Responsibility for Policy:

Vice Principal (HR)

Responsibility for Review:

Vice Principal (HR)

Review date:

April 2009

Appendix A

Methods of Involving Staff and Students in the Development of the Gender Equality Scheme

1. Discussion groups with students
2. Discussion groups with staff
3. Survey of students using questionnaire
4. Survey of partner organisations using questionnaire
5. Survey of all contractors working in College regularly
6. Consultation with staff directly using AbNet
7. Consultation with members of the College's Equal Opportunities Committee
8. Consultation with recognised trade unions

Appendix B

Gender Equality Scheme

Gender Profile

The gender profile of the College's students and staff for the year 2005-06 (the most recent for which data are available) was as follows:

Student Information

In 2005-06 there were 31,067 enrolments. Of these 13,232 (42.6%) were men and 17,835 (57.4%) were women.

Although a higher proportion of College students are women it is still the case that men and women are disproportionately represented in certain vocational areas. For example in engineering related subjects 96% of students were men, in construction 97% of students were men.

A comparison of student enrolments by gender compared with previous years is as follows:

Category	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Male	41.10%	43.80%	42.60%
Female	58.90%	56.20%	57.40%

An analysis of the course completion rates by gender compared with the two previous years is as follows:

Category	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Male	85.60%	88.00%	88.80%
Female	84.60%	86.60%	87.90%

An analysis of student achievement rates by gender compared with the two previous years is as follows:

Category	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Male	80.50%	81.40%	82.80%
Female	80.60%	79.00%	81.00%

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Gender Profile of Staff

The gender profile of College staff over the last 3 years is as follows:

<u>Academic Year</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>
<u>2003-04</u>	<u>62%</u>	<u>38%</u>
<u>2004-05</u>	<u>61%</u>	<u>39%</u>
<u>2005-06</u>	<u>59%</u>	<u>41%</u>

Women generally are traditionally less well-represented than men in senior posts. However, in the College the representation of women in promoted posts, first line management, middle management and senior management is high. For example:

Category of Post	Women	Men	Total
Principal		1	1
Vice Principals	1	1	2
Director of Learning and Teaching		1	1
Associate Principals	2	2	4
Sector Managers	1	3	4
Department Heads	8	10	18
Operations Managers	5	2	7
Promoted Lecturers	28	28	56
First Line Managers/Supervisors	13	9	22
Total	58	57	115
% of Total	50.43%	49.57%	100%

Recruitment and selection, career progression, grievance and disciplinary cases, staff development and continuing professional development are all monitored by reference to gender to ensure that there is no gender bias in any of the College's HR policies, procedures or practices.

Appendix C

Equal Pay Audit

In order to ensure that the College's pay structures did not reflect any gender bias and did not contravene Equal Pay legislation an equal pay audit was commissioned in 2005-06.

The audit found that the College had well developed policies and procedures to ensure equality between men and women in all aspects of their employment and equal pay was regarded as an integral part of the College's employment practice.

The equal pay audit also concluded that there was no evidence of sex discrimination on the provision of benefits to College employees such as pensions, holidays or sick pay and access to overtime or specific job allowances. The overall conclusion of the equal pay audit was that Aberdeen College treated employees of both genders equitably on pay and benefits matters.

The College will carry out a further equal pay audit in 2008-09.

Gender Equality Duty

Impact Assessment

The following information was considered in carrying out a gender impact assessment which informed the Gender Equality Scheme and Action Plan for 2007-08:

1. Statistical information on the recruitment, retention and achievement of students
2. Statistical information on the recruitment, promotion, training and resignation of staff
3. Information obtained following a European Peer Review of Gender Mainstreaming as part of the Leonardo da Vinci project in which the College was a partner (a copy of the Peer Review Report is available on request from the Vice Principal (HR))
4. Information obtained from staff and student discussion groups and student focus groups
5. Information obtained as part of the Redress the Balance project (the College is one of 10 involved in this project designed to address issues of occupational segregation)
6. Information obtained from equal pay audit and job evaluation of all senior and middle management posts (this exercise is continuing with an evaluation of all first line management posts)



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