



SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME

REVISED FOR

2010

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Foreword

Hereford Sixth Form College remains fully committed to ensuring equality of opportunity and to promoting positive attitudes towards all people regardless of age, disability, gender, gender identity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. Our aim is to be a truly inclusive college where individual differences are respected and where all staff and students have a fair opportunity to fulfil their potential.

As a result of equality legislation, all public authorities, including all sixth form colleges, have duties to promote equality. At Hereford Sixth Form College we view this legislation as an excellent opportunity to make equality integral to all our work. Revising our *Single Equality Action Plan* has helped us to evaluate our current provision as well as to prioritise our next steps.

In revising our *Single Equality Action Plan* we have involved students and staff through a range of activities and we are grateful to everyone who has taken the time to participate in these initiatives. The feedback has been invaluable in revising our plan.

At Hereford Sixth Form College we welcome our statutory duties to take a pro-active approach to the promotion of equality. We believe that our revised *Single Equality Scheme* will provide the essential framework for us to implement our duties and to make a real difference to our students and staff.

Ken Hopkins
Chair of Governors

Jonathan Godfrey
Principal

1. Introduction

In the College's earlier equality schemes (available as archived documents on the College's website) detail was given both on the legislative framework and on the general and specific statutory duties which apply to all public bodies, including sixth form colleges.

The current revised scheme remains compliant with these duties, which cover race, disability and gender, but it also looks forward to the introduction of the single equality duty which will cover four additional equality strands.

The new single equality duty is due to come into force in 2011 as announced by the Government in July 2008. The new duty will cover all seven equality strands, namely, age, disability, gender, gender identity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. The College's *Single Equality Scheme* as revised for 2010 takes account of all seven of these equality strands.

2. Development of our revised *Single Equality Scheme*

2.1 How have we planned and organised our scheme?

The planning, co-ordinating and drafting of our revised *Single Equality Scheme* has been led by Ruth Brinton, Deputy Principal (Staff and Students) with the assistance of Jenny Hall, Head of Learning Support. Both have undertaken considerable staff development in equality issues and in the implications of recent equality legislation.

The drawing up of the revised *Single Equality Scheme* has included: offering consultation with staff and students; agreeing the *Action Plan* to address gaps in our current provision which require development; and identifying data and information required to develop and maintain and monitor our Scheme.

In the process of revising our Scheme we have:

- involved staff and students in producing the Scheme and developing the *Action Plan* (Section 2.2);
- ensured that all actions are included in the College's Operational Plan 2010 and cross-referenced with the College's strategic objectives (Section 6);
- set out how we will assess the impact of our existing and proposed activities (Section 5);
- produced a revised *Single Equality Scheme Action Plan* for 2010 (separate complementary document);
- established how we will report on our progress and review and make further appropriate revisions to our Scheme (Section 6).

2.2 How have we involved staff and students in revising our scheme?

All staff have been invited to be involved in the revision of the Scheme. Student feedback was obtained through discussions in a selection of classes, through the Learning Support Department and through the meeting of the Student Council Quality and Equality Sub-Group on 16th November 2009.

The feedback from staff and students has been used to draw up actions which are included in the *Single Equality Scheme Action Plan* as revised for 2010.

3. Principles, Aims and Objectives of our revised *Single Equality Scheme*

3.1 Principles

The commitment to delivering our revised *Single Equality Scheme* is embodied in the following principles:

- a) Discrimination and harassment, direct or indirect, based on a person's disability is unjust. It is the right of all individuals to expect fair treatment.
- b) All members of the College - governor, employee, student or visitor - will be valued equally and treated considerately.
- c) The social model of disability will be promoted across the College.
- d) The promotion of excellent practice in equality will be central to all aspects of College life: learning, teaching, employment, environment, student services.
- e) All students are entitled to an inclusive learning environment and the provision of an accessible curriculum.
- f) Staff and students are entitled to dignity and respect in the workplace and learning environment.
- g) The commitment and involvement of staff and students is essential to the implementation of our revised *Single Equality Scheme*.

This revised *Single Equality Scheme* sets out the framework within which the College intends to promote equality for and prevent discrimination against, our students, staff, governors and visitors.

We respect and wish to celebrate the diversity of our students and staff and we recognise the social and intellectual benefits of a diverse student population.

3.2 Aims

The central aim of the College's revised *Single Equality Scheme* is to require action which will remove any existing barriers to **all** staff, students, governors and visitors, irrespective of age, disability, gender, gender identity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

3.3 Objectives

The College has agreed to maintain the following objectives¹.

A Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

- Objective 1 to embed within the College structure coherent and robust planning, management and decision-making processes associated with the provision of services/support for **all** students and staff
- Objective 2 to ensure that the College's commitment to **all** students and staff is embedded in its strategies and policies
- Objective 3 to carry out systematic evaluation of progress towards providing for the needs of **all** students and staff as an integral part of the College's planning and review cycle

B Pre-enrolment, Enrolment and Induction

- Objective 1 to ensure that the College's procedures for pre-enrolment, enrolment and induction are fully accessible to **all** students
- Objective 2 to make specialist information, advice and guidance available to **all** applicant students and new students
- Objective 3 to record equality information disclosed about a student's needs at the earliest opportunity on the College's Management Information Systems and to consider the implications of this information for the student's experience at the College
- Objective 4 to provide comprehensive support to **all** applicant students and new students to enable them to access College courses, services and facilities wherever possible

¹ We would like again to acknowledge the considerable inspiration gleaned from The Open University in agreeing these objectives and in drafting the principles in 3.1.

C Teaching and Learning

Objective 1 to provide a clear and coherent learning experience for **all** students

Objective 2 to maximise the opportunities for **all** students to achieve the same learning outcomes as non-disabled students

Objective 3 to design all teaching and teaching materials to be accessible to **all** students wherever possible

Objective 4 to provide accessible examination and assessment arrangements for **all** students wherever possible

D Student Support and Guidance

Objective 1 to provide clear and coherent tutorial support for **all** students

Objective 2 to ensure accessibility for **all** students to the full range of Student Services, including Learning Support

E Staff Recruitment, Employment and Development

1 Staff Recruitment

Objective 1.1 actively to promote the College as an equality aware employer

Objective 1.2 to ensure that **all** applicants receive full and fair treatment and are considered solely on their ability to do the job

Objective 1.3 to ensure that **all** disabled applicants whose skills and experience meet the essential criteria of the person specification are interviewed

2 Staff Employment Policies and Procedures

Objective 2.1 to review and develop further the College's employment policies and procedures in order to provide a barrier-free environment for **all** staff

Objective 2.2 to ensure that the work environment and working practices do not constitute unnecessary barriers which may prevent employees participating fully in the life of the College

Objective 2.3 to retain staff who become disabled in their current role wherever possible or to find a suitable alternative role if available (and to provide retraining where reasonable)

3 Staff Development

Objective 3.1 to provide staff development and resources to raise staff awareness of issues relating to equality

Objective 3.2 to support the development of the skills and potential of **all** staff through staff development and promotion opportunities

Objective 3.3 to ensure that all staff teaching students with disabilities have access to relevant information and are supported in their work

Objective 3.4 to integrate appropriate forms of on-going training on equality issues into the College's staff development programme

F Accessible Documentation

Objective 1 to ensure that where practicable all College documentation and publications are accessible to **all** staff, students, governors and the wider community

G Accessible Site

Objective 1 to ensure that where practicable, all new and existing College buildings are accessible

Objective 2 to ensure that access issues are built into new policies and procedures as these are developed and into new projects whether new build or refurbishment

4. The Context of Hereford Sixth Form College

Hereford Sixth Form College is a co-educational, open access College catering mainly for full-time students aged 16-19. The College is funded by the Learning and Skills Council until April 2010, thereafter by the Young People's Learning Agency. It is situated on a pleasant campus on the edge of the city together with Herefordshire College of Technology and the Hereford College of Arts.

The College is housed in purpose-built accommodation including specialist classrooms and laboratories, a Performing Arts Centre, a Music and Music Technology Block, a Sports Hall and Fitness Centre. The Student Services Area includes a Library & Learning Resources Centre, specialist Careers Library and IT Centre. Student study and social space is also provided in The Bridge cafeteria and Student Pavilion. A new Business Studies teaching block is due to open in September 2010.

The College roll is approximately 1820 students. The "catchment" area for the College extends from the Welsh border (and beyond) in the West, to the Bromyard Downs in the North East, to the Malverns in the East and from the Shropshire borders and Ludlow in the North to Ross-on-Wye in the South, an area of more than 600 square miles. Roughly two thirds of our students come from the ten 11-16 comprehensive schools in Herefordshire and the remainder from 11-18 schools or independent schools (mostly local).

The College welcomes students and staff with disabilities. The College has a regularly updated brochure entitled *Supporting Your Learning*, which informs applicant students of the support the College can offer.

The College offers over 40 AS/A level subjects and a range of GCSE subjects in addition to the BTEC National Diploma in Sport and Exercise Sciences and the BTEC First Certificate in Sport. There are no specific academic requirements for entry but most students studying 4 AS levels need to have gained 5 or more GCSEs at grade C or above. The majority of our students study 4 AS levels in year 1 and 3 A level subjects in year 2. Each year approximately 60 students take a one-year GCSE course.

All students follow a General Education programme including A level General Studies, Complementary Studies and a substantial amount of Careers Education. The College helps each individual student to achieve his/her particular career aim, whatever that might involve. The majority continue to higher education, with approximately 85% of leavers taking a degree or other advanced course in a university or other centre of higher education.

Full-time members of staff are expected to undertake pastoral duties. Each student is allocated to a Personal Tutor who is responsible for

monitoring general welfare and academic progress under the direction of a Director of Studies. Almost all full-time members of the teaching staff are Personal Tutors. The College currently employs approximately 115 teaching and approximately 80 non-teaching (including care-taking and cleaning) staff.

The College was inspected by OFSTED in April 2008 and was graded OUTSTANDING in every aspect of its work. Both raw and value-added examination results place the College regularly in the top five of over 100 comprehensive sixth form colleges in the country. The College achieved Learning and Skills Beacon Status in July 2006. The College was graded as OUTSTANDING in all aspects of the LSC Framework for Excellence except for 'Learner Satisfaction' in which it achieved the highest grade of GOOD.

Concerts and dramatic productions are a regular termly feature of College life. There is an excellent record of success in sport and games, with many trophies and representative honours to its credit. Other enrichment activities include Duke of Edinburgh Award, the European Awareness Group and Young Enterprise.

5. Equality Impact Assessments

5.1 What is impact assessment?

Impact assessment is not an end in itself, but is the process which the College must go through in order to:

- identify and act upon the need to modify policies and practices;
- have better regard to the promotion of equality of opportunity;
- eliminate unlawful discrimination (for all aspects of equality, including disability).

5.2 How is the College mapping its policies and procedures for impact assessment?

During the course of the academic year 2005-2006, Ruth Brinton worked closely with Lee Probert, national LSC Equality and Diversity Officer, on the College's suggested approach to meeting its legal duty to assess all its policies and procedures. In April 2006, Lee confirmed in writing that he believed that the College's suggested approach complied with legislative requirements and at its meeting of 25th May 2006, the Governing Body formally adopted the College's methodology for equality and diversity impact assessments.

As detailed in the earlier equality schemes, the College's approach to impact assessment involves three stages: Stage 1: initial screening; Stage 2: secondary phase impact assessment; and Stage 3: full impact assessment.

6. Publication, Monitoring and Review of the revised *Single Equality Action Plan*

The revised *Single Equality Scheme Action Plan* is published as a complementary document on the College website, on the College Virtual Learning Environment and is also available as a printed document (a copy has been distributed to each member of the SMT and to all governors and a copy has been placed in the College Library & LRC and in the Staff Common Room). Copies are available in three alternative formats (Braille, large print and audio CD) via Jenny Hall, Head of Learning Support at the College.

All objectives in the revised *Single Equality Scheme Action Plan* have been cross-referenced with the College's strategic objectives and integrated into the College's *Operational Plan 2010*. The objectives in the Operational Plan are monitored every month by the Senior Management Team. The named manager with responsibility for an objective due for completion reports on progress to the meeting of the team. This monthly monitoring ensures that no objective "falls into a black hole". A report of each month's monitoring cycle is given to the Governing Body for discussion at its next full meeting.

Finally, we would welcome feedback on this revised *Single Equality Scheme* and *Action Plan* and the way it operates. We are interested to know how effective they are in promoting and delivering equality. Feedback can be sent by e-mail to rmb@hereford.ac.uk or to jeh@hereford.ac.uk, or by writing to us at Hereford Sixth Form College, Folly Lane, Hereford HR1 1LU.

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