



Writtle  
University  
College

## Equality Policy

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<b>Policy Owner</b>	<b>Department</b>
E&D Steering Group	E&D Steering Group
<b>Version Number</b>	<b>Date drafted/Date of review</b>
2.0	28 February 2017
<b>Date Equality Impact Assessed</b>	<b>Has Prevent been considered (see Policies Guidance if unsure)</b>
28 February 2017	Yes
<b>Reviewed and Approved by (see Policies Guidance for approval process)</b>	<b>Date</b>
SLT Governors	7 March 2017 (pending approval)
<b>Access (tick as appropriate)</b>	
Public access (website) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> And/Or Internal access (MyWi) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Staff and Student access <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Or Staff access only <input type="checkbox"/>

## Policy Overview and Scope

Writtle University College (WUC) is committed to creating and maintaining an inclusive learning and working environment where equality is promoted, diversity is valued and discriminatory behaviour is not tolerated.

We are committed to providing equality of opportunity for all, irrespective of their protected characteristic(s). WUC recognizes the nine protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010, namely:

- age
- sex
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- race
- religion and belief
- sexual orientation
- pregnancy and maternity

We recognise that promoting equality means encouraging participation and engagement, recognising and responding to different needs and addressing structural barriers to achievement.

This policy is applicable to all staff, students, visitors, service providers and any other users of WUC facilities. The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity apply to the way in which we should all treat each other in day to day interactions and are embedded within normal ways of working and the culture of WUC.

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## Policy and Procedure

### Equality and Diversity at Writtle University College

Equality at WUC means the fair and lawful treatment of students and staff and the promotion of equality of opportunity between different groups.

Diversity at WUC means recognising that everyone is different and we respect and encourage these differences and value the benefits this diversity brings.

The Equality Act 2010 requires that WUC has 'due regard' of the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and

- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

We also have a duty to make reasonable adjustments to ensure someone who has disabilities is able to receive the same services, as far as this is possible, as someone who is completely able.

We will use this policy to drive forward equality, diversity and inclusion at WUC, as well as to meet our statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

## **Responsibility and Accountability**

WUC Board of Governors is responsible for setting up and monitoring our strategic direction and has ultimate responsibility for upholding equality and diversity and for the University College's compliance with the Equality Act 2010. The Board receives, via its Personnel and Remuneration Committee, an annual update to assess performance.

WUC Senior Leadership team has delegated responsibility for matters of equality and diversity and is responsible for ensuring the institution works to widen participation in education and employment, meets the learning needs of its students and staff, narrows any achievement gaps and promotes an inclusive culture.

The Equality and Diversity Steering Group steers the planning and implementation of WUC's equality and diversity agenda, ensuring it is central to everything we do. The group is made up of a cross-section of staff and includes student and Governor representatives.

All staff have an individual responsibility for upholding equality and diversity. They are supported in this with awareness sessions at an organisation level and via updates on changes to legislation. Any member of the Equality and Diversity Steering Group can also act as a first point of call for queries or advice.

Every member of staff and student has a responsibility to:

- Treat staff, students and visitors with dignity and respect;
- Listen to what others have to say and respect their point of view;
- Speak out or report to an appropriate authority if they witness, or are aware of, bullying, vindictiveness, verbal or physical aggression and not assume that it is someone else's responsibility;
- Question their own prejudices and assumptions;
- Be familiar with the responsibilities that equality legislation places on them and ensure that they are sensitive to issues of cultural diversity in their work.

## **Objectives**

We have produced our equality objectives for 2016-2020 using analysis of data trends from our annual reports and benchmarking against sector best practice and innovation. We have identified four themes that summarise what we want to achieve and under these we have developed our

equality objectives. It is recognised and viewed as positive that these themes and objectives overlap.

### **2016-2020 equality themes:**

- **Inclusion: we provide an environment that is accessible and welcoming**
- **Attainment: everyone can flourish and succeed to the best of their abilities**
- **Flexibility: we support different ways of working and learning**
- **Embedding: the active promotion of equality informs our culture and behaviour**

## **Theme 1 - Inclusion**

### **Objective 1: Accessibility is a key component of all campus developments**

The challenges of creating a physically accessible campus have been highlighted by students and staff as a key priority for WUC. Our Property and Estates team have undertaken significant work to improve accessibility across campus, and this remains a key consideration in the refit of older buildings and the development of new projects.

### **Objective 2: We have a zero tolerance culture in relation to discrimination and harassment**

Providing a safe campus environment, where all members of our community are treated with respect, is absolutely key to our promotion of equality and our institutional values. Staff and students should be aware of what constitutes unacceptable behaviour and feel confident in challenging and reporting such behaviour should it occur.

### **Objective 3: Ensure students from disadvantaged backgrounds have equality of opportunity when accessing both Further and Higher Education**

Removing barriers that prevent students from accessing education and reaching their full potential is crucial to our pursuit of excellence and our aim of unlocking talent.

## **Theme 2 - Attainment**

### **Objective 4: Narrow the gap in achievement rates between different groups of students**

We will identify which groups of students on higher and further education courses are underperforming and then take positive action to reduce the disparities in achievement rates.

### **Objective 5: Students will fulfil their potential by making good progress in relation to their starting point**

We will focus on consistently improving outcomes for all students, but especially for disadvantaged students by careful analysis of need, close monitoring of individual progress and sharing of high aspirations.

**Objective 6: Appropriate provision is made to ensure all students engage with every aspect of their course, including extra-curricular activities, such as trips and visits.**

We will ensure that all students have an equal chance of accessing opportunities to reach their goals and that barriers to participation are removed to enable all students to have equality of outcome.

### **Theme 3 - Flexibility**

**Objective 7: Flexible modes of study and appropriate support are available to meet the diverse needs of students**

We want to ensure equality of opportunity particularly for those students who have not accessed further or higher education previously, or who are career changers.

**Objective 8: Staff are supported to achieve their career objectives and manage their family and other responsibilities**

We recognise that combining a successful career with raising a family, supporting elderly parents or being a carer is the norm for many of our staff and that staff may need additional support at specific points in their careers, such as returning to work from maternity or parental leave.

### **Theme 4 - Embedding**

**Objective 9: Equality training supports individual development and institutional change**

WUC provides a wide range of equality training for staff to ensure awareness of equality issues. Going forward, we need to review and develop our offering, whilst balancing the need for more focused and specialist training against the challenge of effectively delivering this to all staff.

**Objective 10: Equality is an integral part of the mission of WUC and enhances teaching and research activity**

We will continue with our work on a more student centred and inclusive approach to teaching and learning that encompasses the diverse range of our student population.

### **Monitoring, Reporting and Publishing**

WUC's Equality and Diversity Steering Group will review the Equality Policy on an annual basis to measure progress against objectives and benchmarks and to identify new actions, as appropriate, for the coming year. The outcomes of the review will be collated in an annual report, alongside student and staff data as required by the Equality Act. Both documents will be published on the WUC internet and intranet. An Equality and Diversity report will be submitted to SLT and the Board of Governors on an annual basis.

## **Concerns and complaints**

Students who believe they have been subjected to discriminatory behaviour should refer to the Complaints Procedure for Students and Members of the Public for guidance on how to proceed.

Staff who feel they have been subjected to discriminatory behaviour can make use of confidential services provided by the Employee Advice and Support Services to discuss their concerns. Staff who wish to make a formal complaint about discriminatory behaviour should refer to the Grievance Policy & Procedure guide available on MyWi. If the concern or complaint relates to harassment, the guidance in the University College's Harassment and Bullying Policy should be consulted.

Information on the above is available on the University College's MyWi and on request from Human Resources.

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This policy supersedes any other policy and procedural guidelines, which may be in other existing University College documents. WUC may amend this policy from time to time and any such amendments will be notified via the website, through Writtle Weekly or by email.

If this information is difficult to access, read or understand, it can be provided in another format, for example in large print or audibly.

## Version Control

Version Number	Purpose/Amendment	Date
1.1	Existing policy moved to WUC template and objectives updated for 2016-2020	17 November 2016
1.2	Updated after E&D Steering Group consultation	9 December 2016
1.3	Further updates – Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic)	19 December 2016
1.4	Further updates following re-circulation to E&D Steering Group	21 February 2017
1.5	Final version following further re-circulation to E&D Steering Group	28 February 2017
2.0	Approved by SLT	7 March 2017