

## Gender Equality Statement

This is the College's first Gender Equality Scheme (GES) in response to the Gender Equality Duty 2006. It forms an integral part of the College's wider Equality and Diversity Strategy which promotes equal opportunities regardless of race, gender, disability, age, religion or religious belief or gender identity, in all aspects of its work.

The College is committed to ensuring gender equality in teaching and learning and in its responsibility as an employer. This Gender Equality Scheme (GES) sets out how it intends to reinforce this commitment.

Each set of outcomes and objectives within the Plan will be delivered through the Action Plan (Appendix 2). The GES is an important element of the College's overall commitment to the wider equalities agenda. This wider agenda is not about treating everyone the same, the emphasis has to be on recognising and welcoming people's differences and being responsive to accommodating different needs.

Finally, as the Chair of the Corporation and Principal, we would like to express our personal commitment to the aims, objectives, and values set out in this document.

William Bagnall  
Chair of Corporation

John Guy  
Principal

## Introduction

The Gender Equality Duty comes into force in April 2007 and will require all public bodies including colleges to promote gender equality and eliminate sex discrimination. Instead of depending on individuals making complaints about sex discrimination, the duty places the legal responsibility on public bodies to demonstrate that they treat men and women equally.

The Gender Equality Duty is the biggest change in sex equality legislation for 30 years - since the introduction of the Sex Discrimination Act in 1976. It has been introduced in recognition of the need for a radical new approach to equality – one which places more responsibility with service providers to think strategically about gender equality, rather than leaving it to individuals to challenge poor practice. The Act places a statutory duty on all public authorities, when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need:

- to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment ;
- to promote equality of opportunity for women and men.

This is known as the 'general duty' and came into effect on 6 April 2007.

### What is a Gender Equality Scheme?

- To support progress in delivering the general duty, there is also a series of 'specific duties' which apply to listed public authorities, including colleges.
- These specific duties include:
- preparing and publishing a Gender Equality Scheme (GES) showing how the College will meet its general and specific duties and setting out its gender equality objectives;
- considering the inclusion - within the GES - of objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gap;
- gathering and using information on how the College's policies and practices affect gender equality in the workforce and in the delivery of services;
- consulting stakeholders (e.g. employees, service users and trade unions) and taking account of relevant information in order to determine its gender equality objectives;
- assessing the impact of the College's current and proposed policies and practices on gender equality;
- implementing the actions set out in its GES within three years, unless it is unreasonable or impracticable to do so;
- reporting against the GES every year and reviewing the scheme at least every three years.
- forming an equality steering group comprising of staff, service users, partners and local groups to monitor and promote equality across the organisation.

## **The College's Gender Equality Scheme**

- meets the requirements of the Gender Equality Duty and sets out the College's plans to improve;
- ensures the College is taking the needs and views of all people into account when it develops policies, taking into account the needs of students and staff;
- enables continuous monitoring to effect improvement.

## **Objectives and Action Plan**

This Scheme sets out the framework within which the College can promote equality for, and prevent discrimination against, students, their parents, teaching and support staff and members of the community. The following objectives are intended to support and complement this framework:

- to promote gender equality in all College activities, including ensuring that the organisational functions and policies meet the requirements of the Gender Equality Duty;
- to ensure that gender equality is a key principle in teaching and learning;
- to maintain a proactive approach to facilitating feedback to ensure the provision of College GES compliant services – eg course forums, Student Association, Staff Association;
- to contribute to improving students' achievements for young women and young men;
- to further develop the performance reporting within the College in compliance with the GES.

In order to meet these five objectives a GES Action Plan has been developed and is attached.

The Scheme will be formally reviewed every three years although it is recognised that the Scheme is a living document and will be enhanced as knowledge and experience develop. The GES Action Plan will be reviewed regularly by the College's Equality and Diversity Group, and the Principalship will report annually to the Corporation.

## **Consultation Arrangements**

In developing the first Gender Equality Scheme within the requirements of the Act, the College has consulted through the Joint Staff Group.

## **Arrangements for Publishing and Monitoring**

The Gender Equality Scheme will be published on the College's website.