

# Public Sector Equality Duty

New College is committed to providing an open and safe environment which both values and promotes diversity and equality of opportunity, encouraging all our staff and students to fulfil their potential. This approach forms a vital part of all our policies, procedures, practices and plans.

This section provides information about the specific ways in which we are endeavouring to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty.

## 1. Legal Context

The Equality Act 2010 introduced the concept of the public sector equality duty which came into force in April 2011. The equality duty covers all the protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act, with the exception of marriage and civil partnership:

- age,
- disability,
- gender reassignment,
- pregnancy and maternity,
- race,
- religion or belief,
- sex, and
- sexual orientation.

The general duty requires the College to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, victimisation and harassment and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people from different protected groups, including:
  - Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics;
  - Meeting the needs of people with protected characteristics
  - Encouraging people with protected characteristics to participate in areas where their representation is low.
- Foster good relations between people from different protected groups, including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

The above are also known as the three aims of the general equality duty.

Having 'due regard' means consciously considering the three aims listed above as part of decision-making processes and when reviewing or developing policies.

Due regard for 'advancing equality' involves removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics; taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people; and encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

'Fostering good relations' involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups.

The legislation allows for the more favourable of treatment of some people ('positive action'), but only where the more favourable treatment can be objectively justified as a proportionate means of fulfilling the public sector equality duty.

## 2. College Context

New College's primary purpose is to educate our students, and to support the research of our academic staff. These functions are assisted by a body of administrative and support staff with a wide range of roles.

Since we are also within the University's remit, the College endeavours to follow [the policies of the Collegiate University](#).

## 3. How we identify and monitor equality issues

The College currently has mechanisms and procedures in place in order to identify and monitor equality issues relating to students and staff at the point of selection and recruitment of students and staff, and while in education and employment. We currently:

1. Set standards and develop policies addressing protected characteristics, which are reviewed regularly and designed not to be discriminatory. Our policy documents are published on [the College website](#).
2. Produce statistical data on:
  - Undergraduate admissions,
  - Undergraduate examination results,
  - Non-academic and academic staff at the point of recruitment,
  - Non-academic staff in employment.
3. Use the above statistical data to inform our decision-making and reviews, as measured

## 4. Steps taken to have due regard

Steps taken to have due regard are outlined below in relation to our members: students, academic staff, and non-academic staff.

### 4.1. Students

#### 4.1.1. Student recruitment and admissions

New College is committed to the admission of students on the basis of strictly academic criteria, regardless of national, social or any other characteristics.

Please see [Oxford University Undergraduate Admissions](#).

At the stage of shortlisting undergraduate applicants for interview, University departments take into account [contextual data](#), but this does not influence our decisions about which shortlisted candidates are finally offered places.

The College is actively involved, through our [Widening Access Initiative](#), in reaching out to encourage applications from students from groups that are currently under-represented at Oxford University.

At interviews, we make every reasonable effort to meet the needs of applicants with disabilities, encouraging all candidates to tell us if they have a disability beforehand so that suitable arrangements can be made.

#### 4.1.2. Conduct and discipline

We set clear standards of accepted behaviour through our \_\_\_\_\_

#### **4.1.4. Awareness raising, and fostering good relations**

The College strives to foster good relationships between people from different groups. The Welfare Team (please see 4.1.3.) work to make New College an open and inclusive environment, and to raise the profile of matters relating to protected characteristics within our community. The Cox and Salvesen Junior Fellowships have a social aspect, in addition to their welfare function, which is to make all students feel at home in the College, and to encourage them to interact with other senior members as well as with their tutors. They, together with the relevant JCR and MCR Officers, work to be inclusive of all and encourage communities such as minorities and parents to take part in all aspects of College life. In 2015 sessions on Race Equality and Sexual Consent were included in the freshers' week timetable for the first time, run by the Cox and Salvesen Junior Fellows; these will become a standing feature from now on, alongside LGBTQ events during freshers' week.

The MCR and JCR Officers bring protected characteristics matters to their respective Committees, which in turn represent the student community in all major College committees.

## **4.2. Academic staff**

### **4.2.1. Recruitment**

It is the policy of the College that, subject to statutory provisions, no applicant or member of staff will be treated less favourably than another because of his or her age, sex, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, racial group, ethnicity, religion or belief, or disability. In all cases, ability to perform the job is the primary consideration. Please see our [Equality policy](#).

The College invites all candidates for all appointments to complete an equal opportunities monitoring form, and the results are analysed and monitored. All selection committees have at least one member of each sex.

### **4.2.2. Conduct and discipline**

We set clear standards of accepted behaviour through our [Equality and Harassment policies](#). (The latter was updated in 2015 alongside the University's policy.) Any unlawful discriminatory behaviour, including harassment, victimisation or bullying by individuals or groups, is unacceptable, and is regarded extremely seriously. It can form grounds for disciplinary action, which may include dismissal.

### **4.2.3. Training and awareness raising, fostering good relations**

Members of academic staff are regularly informed about relevant courses run by the University. College tutors are required to take specific courses relevant to their roles (e.g. course for undergraduate admissions tutors.)

### **4.2.4. Support & Welfare**

Support for academic staff in College is provided through the Warden and the College Officers. In addition, junior academic staff at the start of their career (Junior Research Fellows and stipendiary lecturers on contracts longer than one year) are assigned mentors from within the Fellowship in a related subject area. Academic

staff with joint University appointments are designated mentors within their University department.

### **4.3. Non-academic staff**

#### **4.3.1. Recruitment**

As in academic staff recruitment, it is the policy of the College

Support for staff mental health is provided through our subscription to the University's Occupational Health Service (OUOHS). The College also uses their counselling assessment and counselling service for staff on a pay per session basis. All staff may attend 'stress in the workplace' training sessions and seminars such as 'dealing with difficult people'. Where necessary, the College provides for one-to-one mentoring as a means of supporting staff in their work. The College also offers staff membership of an employee assistance programme, which is a completely confidential service offering advice on a wide range of subjects via telephone or face to face. Tel: 0415F0 11 Tf 1 0 0 1 4 738.33398 Tm 8474 24. 1 435.53515 700.4