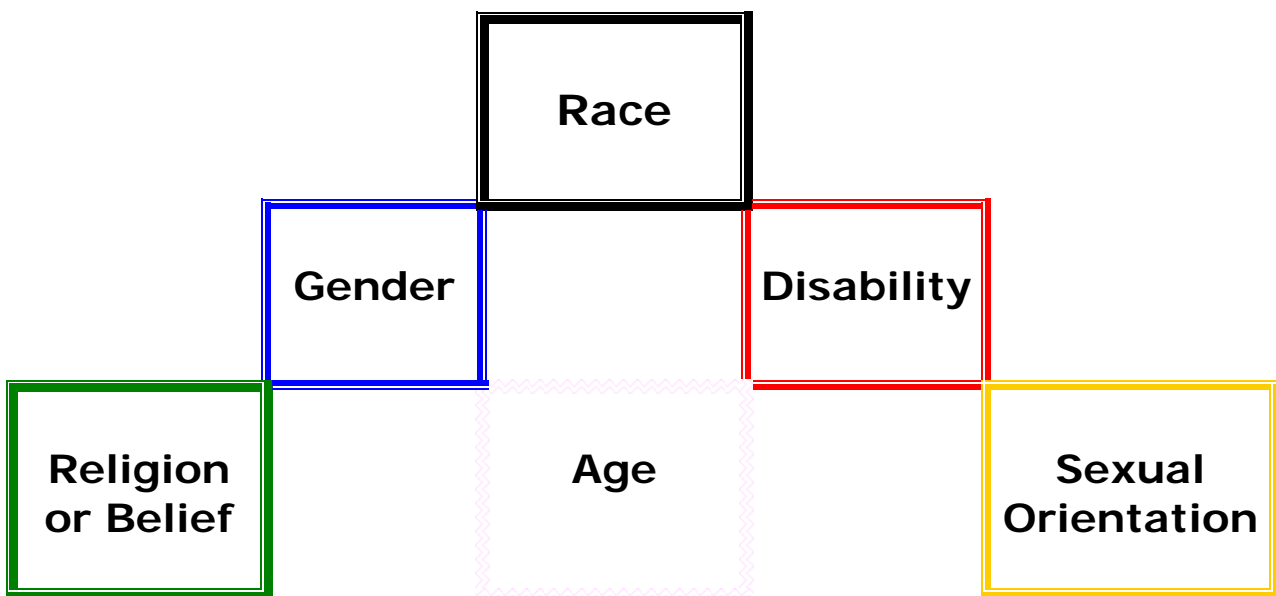




**University College  
NORTHAMPTON**

# **Equality and Diversity Policy**

***“More Equal – More Diverse”***



# 1. Equality and Diversity Policy Statement

- 1.1 University College Northampton (UCN/ the institution/ the University College) is committed to treating all members of staff, students and applicants fairly and equitably regardless of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, religious or political beliefs, membership of professional associations or trade unions, disability, marital status, family responsibility and socio-economic standing or any other category where discrimination cannot be reasonably justified. UCN will ensure that no unjustifiable requirements or conditions are imposed that could disadvantage individuals on any of the above grounds.
- 1.2 University College Northampton (UCN) believes that it must be proactive in promoting equality through the embracing, valuing and recognition of difference including cultural differences.
- 1.3 UCN is committed to a wide ranging Equalities Action Plan to tackle all facets of inequality and discrimination, to create genuine equality of opportunity and promote good relations between people of different groups. In realising these commitments, UCN expresses its opposition to all forms of discrimination and its intention to take positive action in promoting equality and justice.
- 1.4 UCN seeks to create an accessible institution and to extend opportunities in education, training and employment to those groups identified as under-represented in Higher Education.
- 1.5 In order to meet these objectives, UCN will take Positive Action including seeking and delivering adequate resources to implement this Policy. In addition UCN will review the equality implications of its policies and procedures and monitor their outcomes.
- 1.6 The University College intends to disseminate this policy widely to all staff and students. In addition it will bring this policy to the attention of contractors, visitors and associates who will be expected to adhere to this and other associated Equality Policies and Procedures. UCN will strive to ensure that all adhere to the Policy in their work.
- 1.7 This policy is informed by a number of key principles:
  - 1.7.1 Discrimination, whether direct or indirect, that is based on a person's gender, colour, race, ethnicity or national origin, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or any other irrelevant distinction is unlawful, unjust and a waste of human resources. UCN is committed to the elimination of unfair discrimination through the adoption of a Zero Tolerance principle and to the provision of equality for all, in education, training and employment.

- 1.7.2 All individuals have a right to be treated fairly, with dignity and respect. Since collective group affiliations are often central to people's identities, fair treatment entails acknowledging cultural diversity and respecting cultural differences. The promotion of true equality of opportunity, embracing of diversity and the treatment of people with due regard and respect for differences requires monitoring, target setting and the development of programmes of positive action. Such programmes need to be regularly reviewed and revised when needed.
- 1.7.3 UCN acknowledges that as a community it may still reflect patterns of inequality that are widespread in society at large. UCN recognises that the creation of a truly inclusive community, where cultural diversity is positively valued and unlawful discrimination in all its forms is eliminated, will entail considerable and ongoing work, and require a wide ranging action plan which actively engages all sections of the community, including both staff and students. In order to meet legislative requirements UCN must ensure that the promotion of equality becomes central to the way the institution works. While certain facets of equality Legislation covering gender, race and disability apply to all functions and activities of the University College, they have particular pertinence to those areas of activity that directly affect staff and students. The main priorities therefore relate to student admissions and progress; teaching, learning and assessment; provision and access to support services; and staff recruitment, selection and career progression. These areas in particular require robust Equality Impact Assessments.

## 2 Definitions

- 2.1 **Direct Discrimination** This occurs when a person is treated less favourably than someone else for reason of their gender, race, ethnic origin, disability, age, sexual orientation or religion or belief.
- 2.2 **Indirect discrimination** This occurs where a provision, criterion or practice is applied equally to everyone but the provision, criterion or practice puts or would put members of one group at a particular disadvantage and is not a justifiable means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- 2.3 **Victimisation** This occurs when someone is treated less favourably because of their involvement in a discrimination complaint.
- 2.4 **Harassment** This refers to unwelcome comments (written or spoken) or physical conduct based on gender, race, ethnic origin, disability, religion and or sexual orientation. It violates a person's

dignity and/or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating and/or offensive environment for them.

- 2.5 **Equality Impact Assessment** This refers to a detailed and systematic analysis of the actual or potential effects of a formal or informal policy, proposed policy, practice, criterion or service to determine whether it has a differential impact upon identifiable groups of people.
- 2.6 **Positive Action** This refers to a variety of measures designed to counteract the effects of discrimination and encourage members of under-represented groups to take advantage of opportunities. Unlike positive discrimination, which is unlawful in the UK, positive action is lawful. Examples include the provision of facilities to meet the special needs of people from particular groups in relation to their training, education or welfare; and the encouragement of applications from particular groups that are under-represented in particular areas of work.
- 2.7 **Zero Tolerance** This refers to a principle whereby behaviour, attitudes and language which may be deemed to be offensive, derogatory or discriminatory is not overlooked but challenged - with the aim of effecting change or redress.

### 3 **Commitment**

- 3.1 The University College's commitment to Equality and Diversity is supported by recognition of the following:
- 3.2 A successful Equality and Diversity Policy requires the active support of the whole University community. UCN therefore intends to seek the commitment and involvement of all sections of staff and students in the implementation of the Equality and Diversity Policy and Equalities Action Plan through ongoing mandatory staff development activities and dissemination and sharing of updates regarding the Legislation and other relevant information.
- 3.3 In addition to being unjust, unlawful discrimination represents a waste of human resources, loss of opportunity for the maximising of individual contribution and talent and a denial of opportunity for individual self fulfilment. This is not only detrimental to The University College, but has a negative and damaging effect on the people who work and study here. It contravenes an individual's right to dignity at work and study.
- 3.4 Discrimination erodes and violates a person's dignity and creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating and offensive environment and this must and will not be tolerated.

- 3.5 Through programmes of lawful Positive Action (where appropriate), it is intended to increase the level of participation of students, staff and clients from under-represented groups. This will be informed through the undertaking of Equality Impact Assessments.
- 3.6 University College Northampton will encourage good practice in mainstreaming and effecting Equality of Opportunity and promotion of Diversity with internal networks and external organisations.
- 3.7 To this end, the institution will work in partnership internally with although not limited to:
- Trade Unions
  - Student Union

And externally with, although not limited to:

- Community Equality Interest Groups
- The Northamptonshire Racial Equality Council
- Northamptonshire Lesbian Gay and Bisexual Alliance
- Ability Northants
- Commission for Racial Equality
- Disability Rights Commission
- Equal Opportunities Commission
- Higher Education Funding Council for England
- Other Higher Education Institutions and Bodies and Networks
- The Equality Challenge Unit

## 4 Responsibilities

### 4.1 Organisational Responsibilities

- 4.2 The **Governing Council** of UCN is ultimately responsible for ensuring compliance with the requirements of Equality Legislation and Regulations and will receive an annual progress report on implementation of the Equality and Diversity Policy and its associated Equalities Action Plan.
- 4.3 The **Rector** has responsibility for ensuring the implementation and review of the policy and associated action plan; ensuring that staff are aware of their responsibilities and accountabilities under the policy; and ensuring that any breaches of the policy are dealt with appropriately. Currently the Rector delegates the management and co-ordination of this responsibility to the **Pro-Rector (Academic)**.
- 4.4 A joint committee of Senate and the Governing Council - the **Equality and Diversity Committee (EDC)** - has a remit to advise the Rector, the Senate and the Governing Council on strategic policy development and implementation. An **Equality and Diversity Action Group (EDAG)** (which includes representatives from the Recognised Trade Unions, Student Union, Deans of School,

Heads of Department, Staff and Student Representatives and Community equality interest groups external to UCN) reports to the Equality and Diversity Committee and has a distinct remit to inform, monitor and review policy and practice relating to the specific requirements of implementation of Equality Legislation and Regulations.

- 4.5 The work of both the EDC and EDAG is supported by two Equality and Diversity Officers (Staff and Students) who comprise an **Equality and Diversity Unit**. As well as supporting the pro-active implementation of the University College's equality and diversity policies and action plans, including the race equality policy and associated action plan, the Equality and Diversity Officers have a responsibility to submit annual monitoring reports and reports for Senate and Governing Council and other appropriate committees on progress in implementing the action plan(s).
- 4.6 UCN also recognises that it has a responsibility to ensure that the requirements of the Legislation are implemented through **partnership** and **procurement** arrangements. In relation to formal partnership activities with public, private and voluntary sector organisations, UCN will ensure that partners are fully aware of the University College's policy and that partner organisations also have in place appropriate policies and where appropriate are able to meet the general duties of the Legislation. In relation to procurement, UCN will seek to develop good practice in communicating the values, standards and expectations it has of suppliers and contractors with regard to all in/equality facets. Legislation currently requires that Race and Disability receive specific focus.
- 4.7 All **Deans of School** and **Heads of Department** have direct responsibilities for promoting equality and good relations between different groups. These include: ensuring that any issues of discrimination and/or breaches of the policy are dealt with through appropriate University College procedures; provision of staff development and training in relation to equality and diversity; and the inclusion within annual reviews and development plans of specific objectives relating to in/equality. In addition, the **Academic Registrar**, along with the **Directors of Human Resources, Student Services, and Educational Partnerships and Lifelong Learning** have particular responsibilities in mainstreaming equality objectives into policies and functions within their spheres of responsibility.
- 4.8 **Management Responsibilities**
- 4.8.1 Management responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity entail within their respective sphere of responsibility the following:

- 4.8.2 Actively participating in proactive measures, utilising a variety of tools including the Equality Impact Assessment Process.
- 4.8.3 Ensuring that bullying and harassment are not tolerated.
- 4.8.4 Ensuring that wittingly or unwittingly they are not carrying out or requesting to be carried out acts which may be deemed to be discriminatory.
- 4.8.5 Facilitating effective communication between management and staff by ensuring that information is cascaded/disseminated/distributed amongst the staff and student groups for whom they have responsibility.
- 4.8.6 Ensuring that staff are fully trained to perform their roles and that staff are released to attend mandatory programmes of training on Equality and Diversity and any updates to the required training.
- 4.8.7 Ensuring where appropriate that Disciplinary and Grievance Policies and Procedures and associated Policies are effectively implemented.
- 4.8.8 In liaison with the Human Resources Department and the Academic Registry, ensuring that accurate records are maintained for both Staff and Student groups. This entails thorough records being kept of all reported incidents, notably complaints, grievances and disciplinary cases, and their outcomes.

#### 4.9 **Individual Responsibilities**

- 4.9.1 All staff and students have a responsibility to co-operate in ensuring that the aims and objectives of the policy statement are achieved.
- 4.9.2 All staff are required to participate in the Equality and Diversity Training and Development Opportunities provided.
- 4.9.3 All individuals have a duty to take reasonable steps to ensure that they encourage Equality and Diversity within UCN and to ensure that their actions do not contribute wittingly or unwittingly to unfair or discriminatory treatment of others.
- 4.9.4 Individuals are encouraged to support colleagues who may be experiencing unfair or discriminatory treatment through bringing this to the attention of the perpetrator and/or by

encouraging the recipient to take action through informal and formal Procedures.

## 5 **Assessing the Equality Impact of Policies**

- 5.1 The requirement to assess the impact of policies is a specific duty of the Race and Disability Equality Legislation. However, in order to embed best practice into all of the University College's activities; consideration of the impact on equality shall form an integral aspect of all policy formulation and formal reports.
- 5.2 University College Northampton seeks to ensure that its policies and procedures are inclusive and that students and staff from a diversity of backgrounds are equally satisfied with UCN and have confidence in its commitment to promote equality and good relations between different groups. To this end, UCN will regularly review policies and procedures to assess their impact on students and staff from different groups, and will build consideration of Equality and Diversity Implications into its strategic planning and review processes at Institutional, School and Departmental level.
- 5.3 Assessing the impact of policies and procedures will be achieved through an inclusive and interactive process of Equality Impact Assessments which will initially include screening policies and procedures in consultation with members from different ethnic communities and Community equality groups
- 5.4 The purpose of screening is to identify those policies and procedures that are likely to have a significant impact on identified inequality so that greatest resources can be devoted to these policies and procedures. UCN has recently adopted a common format for the formulation of policies and identified a schedule for reviewing them. As part of this review process, UCN will review each policy in relation to the following criteria:
  - 5.4.1 Is there any evidence of higher or lower participation or uptake by different groups?
  - 5.4.2 Is there any evidence that different groups have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities?
  - 5.4.3 Is there an opportunity to promote equality or good relations between groups in a better way by altering policy or practice, or working with others in the wider community?
  - 5.4.4 Is there any evidence from consultations with members from under-represented communities or from research that

particular policies create problems for specific groups and is this disproportionate?

5.5 If the answer to any of these questions is positive, then consideration will be given as to whether the policy will be subject to an equality impact assessment procedure. The screening process will identify priorities for equality impact assessments and lead to a timetable for conducting equality impact assessments. Both the screening process and subsequent equality impact assessments will generate ongoing action plans.

5.6 UCN recognises that equality monitoring is vital both for the screening process and subsequent equality impact assessments. UCN with the support of the Information and Planning Unit and Human Resources Information Systems Group has now completed an assessment of the extent and quality of its baseline data and of existing monitoring arrangements within each of the University College's functional areas. Existing monitoring data on staff recruitment and selection, and student admissions and retention are already informing reviews of the University College's staff recruitment and widening participation policies, respectively. UCN recognises, however; that assessing the impact of its institutional policies and procedures necessitates as a minimum:

5.6.1 Measures to improve the response rate on equality monitoring forms.

5.6.2 Systematic monitoring of both staff and student progress.

5.6.3 Analysis of the results of staff and student satisfaction surveys by all the equality dimensions.

5.6.4 Monitoring of complaints and appeals on an annual cycle.

5.7 UCN also recognises that in order that an effective assessment of its institutional policies and procedures takes place it is imperative that there is consultation with groups of staff and students from minority groups, and with groups and representatives from minority community organisations. EDAG will promote good practice in both the use of data and consultation strategies.

## **6 Admissions, Access and Widening Participation**

6.1 University College Northampton is committed to the principles of fair access and widening participation. This commitment entails a particular concern to increase the successful participation in higher education of students with low previous educational qualifications or no family history of participation in higher education, those from lower socio-economic groups and those from Black and Asian communities. This commitment is incorporated in the University

College's strategy for widening participation and its student admissions policies. Against this background, UCN strives to recruit a student population that reflects its multicultural, diverse and cosmopolitan values, and to ensure that there are no barriers to access on the basis of ethnic identity. UCN also aims to support all students to achieve their full potential, and will ensure that its teaching, learning and assessment policies support this aim.

- 6.2 To enable UCN to fulfil its aims in relation to students, UCN has screened its policies in this area and will monitor student applications, admissions, progression, awards and first destinations across all the differing equality dimensions on an annual basis. Data will be analysed and used to:
  - 6.2.1 identify actual and potential inequalities or unfair practices
  - 6.2.2 Inform planning and decision making processes at institutional, School and Departmental levels
  - 6.2.3 Facilitate the setting of targets and the establishment of specific action plans
  - 6.2.4 Review the impact of policies in tackling discrimination and promoting equality and good relations between different groups
- 6.3 An annual monitoring report will be presented by the Equality and Diversity Committee to Senate and the Governing Council, and a digest of monitoring outcomes will be published on the UCN web site in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act.

## **7 Recruitment, Retention, Promotion, Career Progression, Training and Development**

- 7.1 University College Northampton is committed to the principles of equality of opportunity and respect for cultural diversity. This commitment means that it is particularly concerned to ensure that staff are selected, developed and promoted on the basis of merit and that at the same time positive action is taken to facilitate the creation of a more diverse workforce.
- 7.2 Recognition of inequality that exists between and within groups will be addressed through implementation of the Pay and Reward Framework. In addition UCN will endeavour to facilitate the capacity of individuals to manage their home and work commitments through the implementation of a variety of flexible working options outlined by the Department of Trade and Industry and JNCHES.
- 7.3 Within the parameters of this Equality and Diversity Policy, UCN will strive to establish an employee profile that more closely matches

the proportion of people from minority and under-represented communities in relevant National UK and regional catchment areas and more closely mirrors the diverse student population at UCN. To this end, UCN will ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to applicants or employees.

- 7.4 To enable UCN to fulfil its aims in relation to staff, UCN will monitor staff applications, shortlists, appointments, promotions and staff development and training on an annual basis. Data will be analysed and used to:
  - 7.4.1 Identify any practices that may be discriminatory, either directly or indirectly
  - 7.4.2 Inform planning processes at institutional, school and department levels
  - 7.4.3 Facilitate the establishment of targets and specific action plans
  - 7.4.4 Review the impact of policies in tackling discrimination, creating genuine equality of opportunity and promoting good relations between groups
- 7.5 The Equality and Diversity Committee will present an annual monitoring report to Senate and the Governing Council, and a digest of monitoring outcomes will be published on the UCN web-site in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act.

## **8 Training, Awareness and Guidance**

- 8.1 UCN recognises that it needs to provide appropriate support to enable its Council members, staff and students to act in accordance with the Legislation governing the Equality and Diversity Policy. This includes:
  - 8.2 Providing information on Equality Legislation and the implications for University College policies, practices and individual responsibilities.
  - 8.3 Ensuring that specific training and guidance is provided to those responsible for carrying out specific functions e.g. staff recruitment and selection or student admissions.
  - 8.4 Providing guidance for all staff and students on how to deal with allegations of discriminatory incidents and breaches of the Equality and Diversity Policy and associated Equality Policies.
  - 8.5 Ensuring that all managers are supported in implementing the Equality and Diversity Policy and making appropriate use of

monitoring information

- 8.6 Reviewing training events and staff development to ensure they embrace the values and principles of the Equality and Diversity Policy and associated Equality Policies.

## **9 Complaints, grievances and disciplinary incidences**

- 9.1 UCN will take seriously any claims of discrimination or harassment, and any instances of non-adherence to the Legislation or not promoting the aims of the University College's Equality and Diversity Policy by its staff, students or visitors.
- 9.2 Those who believe that they have suffered discrimination, harassment or victimisation should raise the matter through the University College's complaints or grievance procedures as appropriate.
- 9.3 Any instance of breach of the Equality and Diversity Policy and associated Equality Policies will be investigated and where appropriate will be considered under the respective disciplinary procedures for staff and students.
- 9.4 With regard to any breach of the policy by visitors, UCN will take appropriate action in relation to the nature of the incident which could also include activation of criminal proceedings.

## **10 Publication Arrangements**

- 10.1 University College Northampton is committed to putting its Equality and Diversity Policy into practice, and to meeting the requirements of the Legislation. It recognises that these are challenging objectives, and that their achievement will require strong leadership, training of governors and staff at all levels, consultation with internal and external communities together with regular assessment of action and progress. The Equality and Diversity Policy and Equalities Action Plan will be published on the UCN web-site. The Policy will be reviewed every three years, with an interim review if appropriate in light of changes to Legislation or priorities identified consequent to Equality Impact Assessment(s) being undertaken; and the Equality Action Plan updated annually.
- 10.2 UCN will also make available via its web-site:
- 10.2.1 A digest of annual monitoring statistics
- 10.2.2 An annual report from the Equality and Diversity Committee on progress against its action plan and targets

- 10.3 In addition, UCN will ensure that annual monitoring reports and statistics are communicated to relevant internal and external stakeholders, including managers staff and students.

## 11 References

### 11.1 European and or United Kingdom Legislation

- 11.1.1 Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA)
- 11.1.2 Employment Equality Regulations 2003 – Sexual Orientation and Religion or Belief
- 11.1.3 Equal Pay Act 1970
- 11.1.4 Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- 11.1.5 Legislation on Age Discrimination Employment Directive Equal Treatment comes into effect in October 2006
- 11.1.6 Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- 11.1.7 Race Relations Act 1976 (RRA)
- 11.1.8 Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 (RRAA)
- 11.1.9 Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (SDA)
- 11.1.10 The Data Protection Act 1998
- 11.1.11 The Freedom of information Act 2000

### 11.2 University College Northampton Policies

- 11.2.1 Harassment and Dignity at Work / Study Policy and Procedures
- 11.2.2 Disciplinary Policy
- 11.2.3 Grievance Policy
- 11.2.4 Occupational Health and Safety Policy

### 11.3 Other Sources of information

- 11.3.1 Gender Trust [www.gendertrust.org.uk](http://www.gendertrust.org.uk)
- 11.3.2 Europa Gender Equality  
[www.europa.eu.int/comm/employment\\_social/equ\\_opp/index\\_en.htm](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/equ_opp/index_en.htm)
- 11.3.3 Age Positive [www.agepositive.gov.uk](http://www.agepositive.gov.uk)
- 11.3.4 Home Office <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/index.html>
- 11.3.5 Partnership For Equality: Action for Higher Education, Joint Negotiating Committee for Higher Education Staff, JNCHES 2003
- 11.3.6 Conducting Impact Assessments for Equal Opportunities in Higher Education: A Guide to Good Practice, HEFCE 2004
- 11.3.7 Sex Equality in Higher Education – 30 Years after the Equal Pay Act, NATFHE commentary, NATFHE 2000

- 11.3.8 Work-Life Balance Guidance for Higher Education Institutions JNCHES 2003  
[www.ucea.ac.uk/work\\_life\\_balance.html](http://www.ucea.ac.uk/work_life_balance.html)
- 11.3.9 The Department of Trade and Industry  
[www.dti.gov.uk/er/regs.htm](http://www.dti.gov.uk/er/regs.htm)

## 12 Policy Review

- 12.1 This Policy was approved by the Equality & Diversity Committee on 1 December 2004.
- 12.2 Consultation has taken place with the Equality Challenge Unit, Joint Consultative Negotiating Committee, and Equality and Diversity Action Group.
- 12.3 This policy will be reviewed on a three yearly basis or amended in the light of future legislation and/ or case law.
- 12.4 The Rector, and delegated Officers are responsible for the implementation and review of this Policy.
- 12.5 The Policy will be reviewed in 2007.