

Quality Manual

01.27.01 SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME 2008-11

PURPOSE To set out the approach to equality and diversity

SCOPE All Staff

RESPONSIBILITY SMT
Student Welfare
Heads of Faculty
Heads of School
Course Directors
Faculty Administration

PROCEDURE

This is a revision of the first West Suffolk College Single Equality Scheme (SES) 2008-11. It sets out the College's approach to equality and diversity. Its focus has been on the statutory duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, Disability Discrimination Act 2005, and Equality Act 2006 to promote equality in terms of race, disability and gender and on some other areas of equality and diversity, but this has changed with the introduction of the Equality Act 2010 which has established nine protected characteristics – sex, race, disability, gender, reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, religion and belief, sexual orientation and age. Where the College should not discriminate and which it is anticipated will become harmonised under one public duty for the College under the equality Act in April 2011

Alternative Formats

This document is available on our website at www.westsuffolk.ac.uk For readers without access to the internet, we can supply a larger print format, upon request. For help with other formats, please call us on (01284) 716257.

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WEST SUFFOLK COLLEGE

Single Equality Scheme

2008-2011

**December 2008
(Revised November 2010)**

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Purpose of the Scheme

This is a revision of the first West Suffolk College Single Equality Scheme (SES) 2008-11. It sets out the College's approach to equality and diversity. Its focus has been on the statutory duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, Disability Discrimination Act 2005, and Equality Act 2006 to promote equality in terms of race, disability and gender and on some other areas of equality and diversity, but this has changed with the introduction of the Equality Act 2010 which has established nine protected characteristics – sex, race, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, religion and belief, sexual orientation and age where the College should not discriminate and which it is anticipated will become harmonised under one public duty for the College under the Equality Act in April 2011.

About West Suffolk College

West Suffolk College is a general further education college with its main campus in Bury St Edmunds Suffolk and centres in other market towns in West Suffolk. It is a leading provider of post-16 education and training in the region with 21,000 learners of whom 2,000 attend full-time. The College has over 1,000 members of staff.

Responsibility for the SES

The Equality and Diversity Co-ordinator is responsible for the content and management of the SES. The SES action plan identifies those colleagues across West Suffolk College who are responsible for each action and these will be reflected in the individual objectives for those involved. .

The West Suffolk College Equality and Diversity Policy Statement

West Suffolk College is committed to an inclusive approach to education and training at the College. It will strive to ensure that West Suffolk College is open and accessible to all those wishing to participate in and capable of benefiting from education and training here.

It values all of the different people studying and working at West Suffolk College and it is committed to developing policies and processes, teaching and learning to tackle inequality and exclusion.

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The College wants to make sure people at West Suffolk College are not discriminated against for any reason, including:

- race/ethnic or national origin
- disability
- sex marriage and civil partnership transgender
- age
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- caring responsibilities
- trade union membership or non-membership
- pregnancy and maternity

In addition to promoting **equality** of opportunity and equality of access to College services, it will also uphold a principle of **diversity** throughout West Suffolk College. Diversity adds another dimension to the equality agenda, by making sure that the **differences** between people, groups and identities are understood, valued and respected. Managing diversity is about improving how people can work and learn together by recognising and valuing their similarities *and* differences.

The College recognises its obligations and responsibilities as an employer and as a major provider of education and training in the community of Suffolk. It will seek to reflect a commitment to equality and diversity in all dealings with members of the public, other agencies and suppliers of services and supplies.

The commitment to diversity and equality with regard to student matters is presented in further detail in the Student Handbook

Legislative Context

Four pieces of legislation are central to this SES (as revised). Three of these are:

- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 (RR(A)A)
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA)
- Equality Act 2006

which set out the existing public duties to promote race, disability and gender equality in everything the College does. The general and specific duties relating to each of these Acts is set out at Annex A. These laws impose positive duties on all public bodies.

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The fourth piece of legislation is:

- Equality Act 2010

This Act (as currently in force) does not impose a positive duty to promote equality more widely but does create the nine protected characteristics, which do apply to employment and to the provision of further and higher education. The College must, therefore, ensure through its functions, policies and practices that it do not discriminate with regard to any of these characteristics. The government is likely to enforce the provisions of the Act to create a positive duty across all the protected characteristics for public bodies in April 2011

Reviewing the SES

Progress towards meeting the commitments detailed in this Scheme and associated Plans are reported annually by our Equality and Diversity co-ordinator to the Equality and Diversity Board and published on the College's website.

The SES is reviewed annually (of which this review is one). Changes are made in response to organisational changes, legislative changes or other factors necessitating review.

Information about the SES will be shared with the College's stakeholders and, particularly with those who have helped it to develop this SES. West Suffolk College will continue to seek the views of others about this SES and about the College's progress towards the targets set out in this action plan.

Involvement and Consultation

West Suffolk College is building its links with the whole of its community. It has approached and joined a number of groups (such as SIFRE) representing a range of diverse interests and the College hopes to publish further details of the consultative links in future editions of this Scheme.

West Suffolk College hopes to work with local agencies concerned with disabilities and with people with disabilities in developing this Scheme

This is an evolving area of College activity. Readers of this Scheme are welcome to send in their views about it. E-mails can be sent to the College at ian.mathers@wsc.ac.uk.

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Impact Assessments

The College has developed its approach to equalities impact assessment. A more consultative process has been created with an initial impact assessment form used to accompany proposed policies which addresses the protected characteristics at the time the policy is drawn up and an impact assessment group meeting on a regular basis which the proposer of the policy and interested stakeholders (including students where appropriate) attend. Training has been given on this process.

Monitoring Arrangements

West Suffolk College monitors the make-up of the staff groups in terms of race, disability, gender, and age. In particular, it will analyse the overall make up of the workforce, recruitment and promotions, training and development, disciplinary and grievance processes, and turnover. This data will be reported through our HR and Equality and Diversity Boards and the consultative arrangements with trade unions. The data will also be published annually on the College website. The aim is to publish these statistics in December in each year.

It will monitor student admissions and progress by racial group, disability and gender. This data will be reported through the Equality and Diversity Board. The data will also be published on the website.

West Suffolk College as an Employer

Currently West Suffolk College employs 1200 staff. It has established employment-related policies and procedures that reflect the commitment to equality and diversity and that assist in achieving and retaining a diverse workforce.

West Suffolk College Governance

This Scheme is subject to the approval of the College Governors, who will monitor performance through the Quality Committee.

West Suffolk College as a Provider of education and training

West Suffolk College is committed to ensuring that teaching and learning are available to and accessible for a broad range of students. This will be achieved

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through: diverse marketing and admissions arrangements; the provision of full and part-time courses; the use of a range of teaching methods and media; the delivery of a diverse curriculum; and the provision of a broad range of student welfare services that cater for students with diverse needs.

West Suffolk College as a Provider of Continuing Professional Development

West Suffolk College will work with and for a range of other agencies by delivering continuing professional development. It will not undertake any collaborative or commissioned activity that conflicts with the commitment to diversity and equality.

West Suffolk College as a Partner

West Suffolk College works in partnership with a broad range of other institutions and agencies to provide services and to support others in achieving community cohesion. The College will ensure those partners adopt the same commitment to equality and diversity as West Suffolk College does. The College's concern is to ensure that students enjoy the same positive experience wherever their place of study. To this end it will work closely with partners to share experiences and learn from each other's best practice.

West Suffolk College as a Purchaser

When buying products or services from another provider, West Suffolk College will seek to be reassured about that organisation's commitment to equality and diversity. This will be a significant factor in selecting during any tendering process.

West Suffolk College Facilities

At the time of this review (November 2010) plans for the renovation of buildings at Anglian Lane to provide facilities for construction students and staff are well-established. West Suffolk College plans to undertake a "DDA audit" of the build plans and to review those facilities thereafter. Where it is appropriate to do so, it will, as a minimum, meet the requirements of BS8300. The College plans to engage the wider community in the build plans and to involve disabled people in refining the College's approach to the new facilities.

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The College is committed to ensuring that its buildings and the facilities therein are accessible and create an environment where everyone can live, learn and work without unnecessary barriers.

How to make a complaint

If you wish to send us a comment, a compliment or a complaint, either about this scheme or about any other matter concerning West Suffolk College, please write to: Dr Ann Williams, Principal, West Suffolk College, Out Risbygate, Bury St Edmunds Suffolk, IP33 3RL, or via our website www.westsuffolk.ac.uk

Students wishing to make a complaint about this Single Equality Scheme, or about any aspect of their experience with West Suffolk College, should pursue this in accordance with the College's Student Complaints Procedure.

Staff wishing to make a complaint about this Single Equality Scheme, or about any aspect of their working life with West Suffolk College, should refer to the Grievance Procedure available in the Procedures Manual

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Legislative Context to the College’s Single Equality Scheme

Race Equality

The Race Relations Act 1976, as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 – referred to here as the Act – places a general duty on public authorities to promote race equality. Under the new duty, and through all relevant functions, public authorities are required to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- promote equality of opportunity
- promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

In addition, the Act places specific duties on; *inter alia*, further and higher education institutions. West Suffolk College is required to have and maintain a written statement of our policy for promoting race equality. It is required to assess the impact of the policies on staff and students of different racial groups and, in particular, on the attainment levels of students. It is required to monitor the admission and progress of students and the recruitment and career progression of staff. It is required to make arrangements for publishing the race equality statement and to publish annually the results of monitoring.

Disability Equality

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 - referred to here as the DDA 2005 – places a general duty on public authorities to promote disability equality. Under the new duty, and through all relevant functions, public authorities are required to have due regard to the need to:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the DDA
- eliminate harassment of disabled people that is related to their disabilities
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life
- take steps to take account of disabled people’s disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably than others.

In addition, the DDA 2005 places specific duties on; *inter alia*, further and higher education institutions. The College was required to publish (and has published) a

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Disability Equality Scheme, which demonstrates how it intends to fulfil the general and specific duties. The College was required to involve disabled people in the development of the scheme. The Scheme sets out the way in which disabled people have been involved in the development of the scheme, the methods for impact assessment and the steps taken towards fulfilling the general duty (an 'action plan'). The Scheme must also set out arrangements for gathering information in relation to employment and the delivery of education, and it must record the College's arrangements for using the information gathered, in particular in reviewing the effectiveness of the action plan and in preparing subsequent Disability Equality Schemes. The College must review the Scheme every three years and must publish a report setting out the steps taken under the action plan and the results of information gathering.

Gender

The Equality Act 2006 sets out a positive duty on public bodies to promote gender equality. Under the duty, and through all relevant functions, public authorities are required to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination and harassment that is unlawful under the Sex Discrimination Act and discrimination that is unlawful under the Equal Pay Act
- promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

West Suffolk College is subject to the duty and the College has produced a Gender Equality Scheme. It is required to consult with employees and stakeholders in drawing up the equality scheme and to publish annual reports of progress. The College must review the Scheme at least every three years. It is required to develop and publish a policy on developing equal Pay arrangements between men and women and to conduct and publish gender impact assessments in employment, policy and services.

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