

Equality Policy



The College's Aims

Exeter College welcomes diversity among its staff, students, alumni and visitors, recognising the particular contributions to the achievement of the College's mission which can be made by individuals from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences.

Exeter College aims to provide an inclusive environment which promotes equality, values diversity and maintains a working, learning and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all its staff and students are respected, to assist them in reaching their full potential. The College will work to remove any barriers which might deter people of the highest potential and ability from applying to the College, either as staff or students.

The College's Commitment

The College is committed to using its best endeavours to ensure that all of its activities are governed by principles of equality of opportunity.

As far as is practicable, no prospective or actual student or member of staff will unjustifiably be treated less favourably than any other, whether before, during or after their study or employment at Exeter College on one or more of the following grounds (subject to any legal constraints and in relation to the protected characteristics laid out in the Equality Act 2010): age; disability¹; gender (including gender reassignment); marital or civil partnership status; parental status; pregnancy or childbirth; race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin); religion or belief (including lack of belief); sexual orientation; or length or type of contract (e.g. part-time or fixed term).

Scope

This policy applies to all members of the College community, both students and staff, whether permanent, temporary, casual, part-time or on fixed-term contracts, to job applicants, to student applicants, current and former students, to honorary and associate members and to visitors to the College.

With regard to staff, the College has published a separate Equal Opportunities and Diversity policy, which provides more information about its equality commitments in relation to recruitment, training & development, etc. A copy of the policy can be found at:

http://www.exeter.ox.ac.uk/information/policies/employee_handbook

With regard to students, this policy applies, but is not limited to, admissions, to teaching, learning and research provision, to scholarships, grants and other awards and benefits under the College's control, to student support and welfare, to access to College accommodation and to other buildings, facilities and services, to health and safety, to personal conduct and to student complaints and disciplinary procedures.

The College expects all its staff, students and visitors to take personal responsibility for familiarising themselves with this policy and to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner towards other staff, students (prospective, current and former) and visitors. Members of the College community have a duty to treat colleagues with respect at all times, and not to discriminate

¹ Under the Equality Act, a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day-to-day activities.

against, victimise² or harass³ other students, members of staff or visitors, whether junior or senior to them. The College regards any breach of this policy by any employee(s) or student(s) as a serious matter to be dealt with through its agreed procedures and which may result in disciplinary action.

In order to realise its commitment to equality of opportunity and to fulfilling the public sector equality duty, the College will:

- promote the aims of this policy;
- promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it, including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding;
- be proactive in eliminating discrimination, including harassment, victimisation and bullying, through training and the production, dissemination and review of its policies, codes of practice and guidance⁴;
- demonstrate due regard in decision-making to the requirements of the general duty of the Equality Act 2010, including understanding the effect of its policies and practices on equality;
- have regard to its obligations under relevant legislation, and for its policies, codes of practice and guidance to mirror the same and be changed to meet the demands of new legislation;
- whilst acknowledging that they are not legally binding, have regard to any Codes of Practice issued or adopted by the Equality and Human Rights Commission;
- make this policy, as well as all codes of practice and guidance, available to all staff, students, contractors and suppliers, and visitors, who work, study, live in or visit the College;
- regularly review the terms of this policy and all associated codes of practice and guidance.

The policy statement is supported by the College's Freedom of Speech Code of Practice, Code of Practice on Harassment, and Complaints and Appeals Procedures.

These can be read online at <http://www.exeter.ox.ac.uk/information/policies/collegepolicies.html>.

The College supports the aims of the University's Integrated Equality Policy, available at <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/missionstatement/integratedequalitypolicy/>.

The College's Responsibilities

The Governing Body of Exeter College has overall responsibility for setting strategic objectives and for taking all reasonable steps to ensure equality of opportunity and the prevention of discrimination, harassment and victimisation of staff, students and visitors in their relationship with the College.

² Victimisation is defined in the Equality Act as treating someone badly because they have done a 'protected act' (or because the institution believes that a person has or is going to do a protected act). A 'protected act' is making a claim or complaint of discrimination (under the Equality Act), helping someone else to make a claim by giving evidence or information, making an allegation that the further or higher education institution or someone else has breached the Act, or doing anything else in connection with the Act.

³ There are three types of harassment that are unlawful under the Equality Act: unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, unwanted conduct of a sexual nature or that is related to gender reassignment or sex, and less favourable treatment because the person concerned submits to or rejects the unwanted conduct. 'Of a sexual nature' can cover verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct including unwelcome sexual advances, inappropriate touching, forms of sexual assault, sexual jokes, displaying pornographic photographs or drawings, or sending emails with material of a sexual nature.

⁴ The Act includes discrimination by association i.e. being related to, or friendly with, someone with a protected characteristic, or perceiving someone to have a protected characteristic.

The Equality Review Committee is responsible for the development, implementation and review of policies and practices to support the College's equality policy in relation to staff, students, contractors and suppliers, visitors and others closely associated with the College. The Committee is chaired by the Rector, and includes representation from all members of the College community (students, academic and non-academic staff).

College Officers and Heads of Department are responsible for the day-to-day implementation and delivery of the College's strategic objectives for equality and diversity in their own areas of responsibility.

The HR Officer supports the day-to-day operation and monitoring of the separate Equal Opportunities & Diversity policy, and is also responsible for organising training for staff so that they are aware of their responsibilities. In addition, the HR Officer reports a range of data and statistics to the Equality Review Committee to demonstrate the extent to which the College is achieving its goals (particularly in the area of recruitment).

All employees, irrespective of their job, seniority, or part-time or fixed-term status have a duty to familiarise themselves with the contents of the separate Equal Opportunities & Diversity policy, and to act in accordance with that policy at all times. Employees also have a responsibility to challenge any unacceptable behaviour should they either witness it or experience it directly.

Monitoring and Audit

HEI's have a duty to implement effective arrangements for the collection and analysis of data for equality monitoring purposes. Collecting and analysing equal opportunities data helps us to ensure that all staff members are treated equally within employment and enables us to measure the effectiveness of our policies.

Equality Review Committee meets regularly to consult on, and develop, the College's equality policies and practices. In addition, equal opportunities monitoring data is reported annually to the Governing Body.

At present, the equal opportunities data held by the College for current academic and non-academic staff is incomplete.

All applicants to academic and non-academic vacancies are asked to complete recruitment monitoring forms, to enable the College to gather data in relation to its recruitment activities.

In addition to the monitoring and assessment arrangements already in place, the College will put in place procedures to ensure that such additional monitoring is undertaken as is necessary to ensure that the College is able to identify possible improvements in its practices, whether in relation to: teaching, learning and assessment; management and governance; admissions, access and participation; students' support and guidance; behaviour and discipline; partnership and community links; staff recruitment, training and career development; and/ or service delivery.

Complaints

The College is committed to protecting its members from any form of harassment or discriminatory behaviour which might inhibit them from pursuing their work or studies. Violent, indecent, disorderly, threatening, abusive, or offensive behaviour or language and bullying are unacceptable forms of behaviour. The College will view seriously any action which runs contrary to these principles, ensuring an environment in which the dignity of other members of College, members of staff and visitors is respected.

For employees, the College has a separate Harassment Policy, which outlines how the College will address any complaints of harassment, victimisation or bullying. The policy can be viewed at:

http://www.exeter.ox.ac.uk/information/policies/employee_handbook

For students, complaints of harassment, victimisation or bullying on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief (or lack of it), sex and sexual orientation should be reported according to the College's Code of Practice on Harassment:

www.exeter.ox.ac.uk/sites/exeter/files/documents/cop_harassment.pdf

Harassment may be broadly understood as consisting of a course of unwarranted behaviour such as to cause, and which may reasonably be expected to cause, such distress or annoyance as seriously to disrupt the work or substantially to reduce the quality of life of another person. It includes any offensive physical act, behaviour or expressions which relate to any of the protected characteristics. Similarly, abusive behaviour of any sort is a disciplinary offence, which should be reported through the appropriate channels.

Any prospective or current student or member of staff, or visitor, who has any other complaint concerning a breach of this policy, may bring such a complaint to the College using the Complaints and Appeals Procedures, available from:

www.exeter.ox.ac.uk/sites/exeter/files/documents/Complaints-and-Appeals-Procedures.pdf.

Exeter College
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