Single Equality Scheme 2022 - 2024

Introduction

The Bedford College Group are committed to supporting and promoting equity of opportunity in all aspects of college life. We encourage everyone to embrace the differences they encounter here. We are home to people from many cultures and backgrounds; and a range of beliefs and identities.

Our college is strongly opposed to discrimination, unfairness and injustice. We believe in treating everyone fairly and celebrating our differences. We do not tolerate language or behaviour that makes others uncomfortable. This includes being treated differently because of any of the 'nine protected characteristics' of the Equality Act (2010) which are protected by law from discrimination (age, disability, race, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, and sexual orientation). Alongside the Equality Act (2010) we have taken into consideration our commitment to the Public Sector Equality Duty (2011).

Our Single Equality Scheme is comprised of two parts; firstly, the scheme itself and secondly an action plan. The College's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee reviews the Single Equality Scheme annually.

Responsibilities

In providing a public function, we must have due regard to:

Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct which the Equality Act prohibits;

Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not;

Foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

Vision

Our aim is that no student, member of staff, volunteer, governor, parent, or any other stakeholder will encounter discrimination on the grounds of a protected characteristic. They would also not be subjected to inappropriate, unwanted, unwelcome, upsetting or embarrassing language or behaviours based on individual differences they have. The upholding of our Single Equality Scheme is the responsibility of everyone.

The Bedford College group aim to provide a welcoming, friendly and safe environment for all, where every person should have the opportunity for full involvement in what takes place, and everyone's contribution to college should be valued and respected. We are committed to making all college facilities accessible, including resources, communications and activities that are free of stereotypes that promote the ethos of equity, diversity and inclusion.

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

The college will consider the needs of all individuals (staff, learners and visitors) when shaping policy, hosting events, delivering services and recruiting staff. We must ensure that our decision-making is robust, transparent and that we have fully considered the impact of our proposal on all minoritised groups. We will therefore keep a record of how our decision making is underpinned by inclusion and carried out using an EDI lens.

There is EIA guidance available, and the process can be supported by the EDI manager. In relation to review, Unity forum will select three policies a year to discuss from an EIA perspective. The forum will then report on this process to the EDI committee.

Demographic Profile

In the 2021/22 academic year, 16.1% of students stated that they were either Black, Asian or Mixed/Dual Heritage. 70.8% of students were White British, and 10.4% were White (other).

17.7% of students told us that they had a Special Educational Need or Disability. 80.4% of students did not declare a disability.

A small number of students (0.3%) told us that they did not identify as the binary genders of male or female. 2.9% of students stated that they were either gay, lesbian or bisexual.

14.8% of students told us that they have a religion or belief.

Equality priorities

We have used our evidence base to identify our key objectives. They are designed to ensure our scheme allows us to focus on those things that will make the biggest impact in terms of advancing equality, diversity and inclusion and helps the college achieve its wider strategic aims.

Each of the objectives is underpinned by specific and timely actions outlined in our Single Equality Scheme Action Plan which is reviewed every term. The Equality and Diversity Impact Measures (EDIMs) specify our targets to quantify the effectiveness of our actions in respect of different groups of people.

Objective 1: Close the achievement gaps for all protected characteristics

EDIMs:

1. Improved achievement for learners from mixed/dual heritage and Caribbean backgrounds. This may include strategies around extra tutorials, extra support, mentoring and the formation of distinct student activity groups (for culture)

2. Improved achievement for specific subject areas with large numbers of diverse students. This may include strategies based around student recruitment processes and EDI focus groups

3. Improved achievement for apprentices from culturally minoritised groups

Objective 2: Ensure the safety and wellbeing of students across all protected characteristics.

EDIMs:

1. The rates for recorded bullying incidents are comparable for all protected characteristics and are broken down by type (homophobic, transphobic etc) with clarity around the reason for the bullying.

2. Students know how to report bullying (particularly those who may be in a more vulnerable group). This would include the reporting of bullying related to gender (and sexual harassment, incel)

3. Students are advocates for each other and actively support each other's inclusion, differences and wellbeing.

4. Disciplinaries for black male students are comparable to the rates with other types of students.

Objective 3: Ensure the debiasing of staff recruitment and create a sense of belonging for current workforce.

    EDIMs:

1. New staff recruitment strategies are fair, effective and working. These include anonymisation of applications, and an independent panel member at interviews.

2. There is an understanding of the content and patterns in the reasons different types of people leave the college (including by different types of roles)

3. Pay gaps are reduced (including the gap between highest and lowest paid people – and job families). This would include gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation.

4. There is an equitable workforce who have a good experience at work and feed back frankly about inclusion at the Bedford College Group

Objective 4: Create strategies for inclusive leadership and governance

EDIMs:

1. There is evidence of good career progression for those from minoritised and under-represented groups

2. Leaders are measured in relation to their contribution to EDI

3. The College promotes and shares its EDI work externally through research, publications, memberships and engagement with wider community initiatives

4. Senior leaders and governors have accessed EDI training and/or qualifications that support and develop their understanding of discrimination and social justice. This might include training in relation to the following themes; Unconscious bias and Microaggressions, Anti-racism, Advocacy (Allyship), Effective people management of diverse teams, Upward mentoring, Intercultural Fluency, Decolonisation and Minority Anxiety

Objective 5: Develop high quality EDI based training for staff

EDIMs

1. The development of EDI practices are utilised and managers know how to look for EDI in observations (for example)

2. Inclusive language (inappropriate banter) training is undertaken by all staff

3. Meaningful Gender Inclusion Training is undertaken by all staff

4. Black History workshops are undertaken by all staff and rolled out to students

Objective 6: Promote and maintain an inclusive environment for LGBTQ+ staff and students

Please see LGBTQ+ Action Plan

Objective 7: Establish The Bedford College Group as an anti-racist organisation.

Please see **Race Equality Action Plan**

Related documents

This Scheme should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Single Equality Scheme Action plan
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Equality Impact Assessment Guidance
- LGBTQ+ Action Plan
- Race Equality Action Plan
- Religion and Belief Policy

These documents are available on the College website and intranet.

Single Equality Scheme Action Plan (2022-2024)

The College Executive has approved a Race Equality Action Plan (2020-2023) with actions in the areas of staff, students and cross-college, which is in addition to this SES Action Plan

Progress on individual objectives and actions is monitored by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee every half term.

Equality strands:

age (A), disability (D), ethnicity (E), gender (G), gender reassignment (GR), marriage & civil partnership (M/C), pregnancy and maternity (P/M), religion and belief (R), sexual orientation (SO)

Objective 1: Close the achievement gaps for all protected characteristics

EDIMs:

1. Improved achievement for learners from mixed/dual heritage backgrounds. This may include strategies around extra tutorials, extra support, mentoring and the formation of distinct student activity groups (for culture)

2. Improved achievement for specific subject areas with large numbers of diverse students. This may include strategies based around student recruitment processes and EDI focus groups

3. Improved achievement for apprentices from minoritised groups

Action	Equality strand	Led by	Date to be achieved	Progress update
1. **Achievement gaps** a) Explore extra tutorials and pastoral support for students from lower achieving, minoritised groups b) Report to committee on potential for student buddying, mentoring and peer support systems c) Develop distinct student activity groups and events based around culture	E	Director of Student Services	June 2023	

2. **Supporting Culturally Diverse Subject Areas**	E		
a. Explore student recruitment processes around motivation for course		Head of Enquiries and Admissions	June 2023
b. Offer EDI student focus groups for departments with large numbers of diverse students		EDI Manager	June 2023
3. **Apprenticeships**:		Executive Director of Apprenticeships	January 2023
a. Review process and systems for identifying additional needs and how these needs are supported in the college and in the workplace	D		
b. Explore strategies to support apprentices from culturally minoritised groups	E		

Objective 2: Ensure the safety and wellbeing of students across all protected characteristics.

EDIMs:

1. The rates for recorded bullying incidents are comparable for all protected characteristics and are broken down by type (homophobic, transphobic etc) with clarity around the reason for the bullying.

2. Students know how to report bullying (particularly those who may be in a more vulnerable group). This would include the reporting of bullying related to gender (and sexual harassment, incel)

3. Students are advocates for each other and actively support each other's inclusion, differences and wellbeing.

4. Disciplinaries for black male students are comparable to the rates with other types of students.

Action	Equality strand	Led by	Date to be achieved	Progress update
1. **Bullying incidents** a) Provide evidence from monitoring of bullying incidents by type, students' complaints and student surveys about the level of effectiveness and consistency in dealing with bullying incidents and complaints	A, D, E, G, GR, M/C, P/M, R, SO	Director of Student Services	June 2023	
2. **Disciplinaries** a) Provide evidence from monitoring of disciplinary actions by department (overall and by protected characteristics) about the level of consistency across all curriculum department in applying the disciplinary policy and procedures	A, D, E, G, GR, M/C, P/M, R, SO	Director of Student Services	June 2023	

Objective 3: Ensure the debiasing of staff recruitment and create a sense of belonging for current workforce.

EDIMs:

1. New staff recruitment strategies are fair, effective and working. These include anonymisation of applications, and an independent panel member at interviews.

2. There is an understanding of the content and patterns in the reasons different types of people leave the college (including by different types of roles)

3. Pay gaps are reduced (including the gap between highest and lowest paid people – and job families). This would include gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation.

4. There is an equitable workforce who have a good experience at work and feed back frankly about inclusion at the Bedford College Group

Action	Equality strand	Led by	Date to be achieved	Progress comments
1. Inclusive recruitment strategies a) Review of anonymisation of applications and independent panel member. Explore data related to this.	A, D, E, G, GR, M/C, P/M, R, SO	Executive Director of HR	November 2022	
2. Exit interviews: a) Report to EDI Committee for themes highlighted in staff exit interviews in relation to protected characteristics	A, D, E, G, GR, M/C, P/M, R, SO	Executive Director of HR	January 2023	

3. Pay gaps a) Report to committee on ethnicity pay gap b) Review data related to gender pay gap c) Report to committee on sexual orientation pay gap	G E SO	Executive Director of HR	January 2023 October 2024 June 2024	
4. Staff Feedback in relation to inclusion a) Report to committee about staff survey responses	A, D, E, G, GR, M/C, P/M, R, SO	Executive Director of HR	October 2022	

Objective 4: Create strategies for inclusive leadership and governance

EDIMs:

1. There is evidence of good career progression for those from minoritised and under-represented groups

2. Leaders are measured in relation to their contribution to EDI

3. The College promotes and shares its EDI work externally through research, publications, memberships and engagement with wider community initiatives

4. Senior leaders and governors have accessed EDI training and/or qualifications that support and develop their understanding of discrimination and social justice. This might include training in relation to the following themes; Unconscious bias and Microaggressions, Anti-racism, Advocacy (Allyship), Effective people management of diverse teams, Upward mentoring, Intercultural Fluency, Decolonisation and Minority Anxiety

Action	Equality strand	Led by	Date to be achieved	Progress update
1. **Career Progression for minoritised staff** a) Report to committee on progression related to members of staff with protected characteristics	A, D, E, G, GR, M/C, P/M, R, SO	Executive Director of HR	April 2023	
2. **Leadership – EDI Contribution** a) Report to committee on how leaders evidence their contribution to EDI	A, D, E, G, GR, M/C, P/M, R, SO	Director of Quality	June 2024	
3. **External EDI Engagement** a) Report to committee on examples of sharing EDI work with other providers and the community	A, D, E, G, GR, M/C, P/M, R, SO	EDI Manager	June 2023	
4. **EDI Training for managers and governors** a) Review of engagement in and quality of professional development pertaining to EDI and leadership.	A, D, E, G, GR, M/C, P/M, R, SO	Director of Quality	June 2024	

Objective 5: Develop high quality EDI based training for staff

EDIMs

1. The development of EDI practices are utilised and managers know how to look for EDI in observations (for example)

2. Inclusive language (inappropriate banter) training is undertaken by all staff

3. Meaningful Gender Inclusion Training is undertaken by all staff

4. Black History workshops are undertaken by all staff and rolled out to students

Action	Equality strand	Led by	Date to be achieved	Progress update
1. **EDI in observations** a. Report to committee on how EDI is explored in teaching observations	A, D, E, G, GR, M/C, P/M, R, SO	Director of Quality	October 2024	
2. **Inclusive Language Training** a. Review of complaints related to inappropriate language b. Report on staff engagement in and quality of 'banter is not okay' sessions c. Report on staff engagement in and quality of 'meaningful gender inclusion' training sessions	A, D, E, G, GR, M/C, P/M, R, SO	Director of Quality	October 2024	
3. **Black history workshops** a. Report to committee on engagement in and quality of black history workshops	E	Director of Quality	October 2024	