



Equal Opportunities Policy (Incorporating the Race Equality Policy)

1. Introduction

ECC is committed to providing equal access to its education and training services and will make every reasonable effort to provide an environment in which everyone, regardless of their background, can study and work to the best of their ability. This policy is central to ECC's mission.

2. ECC Mission and Core Purpose

ECC provides high quality education and training to organisations and to individuals, meeting global skills and labour market needs. We focus on our recognised and established strengths which lie in high quality.

3. Equal Opportunities Policy Statement

ECC is committed to providing high quality education and training that reflects the best practice in equality of opportunity. ECC will encourage successful learning for all students and rewarding work for all staff by establishing a supportive and challenging environment.

ECC aims to encourage the active participation of all sections of the community in lifelong learning. It will provide learning opportunities that accommodate diversity, and seek to raise the aspirations and achievements of students and staff.

ECC will actively promote and encourage good relations between people of different religions, nationalities and racial groups.

The recruitment, selection, education and assessment of students and in the recruitment, selection, training, appraisal, development and promotion of staff, the only consideration must be that the individual meets, or is likely to meet the requirements of the programme or course or post.

The requirements being met, no student or employee will be discriminated against on the basis of their sex, race, colour, ethnic origin, nationality (within current legislation), disability, sexual orientation, marital status, caring or parental responsibilities, age, or beliefs on matters such as religion and politics.

ECC is committed to provide a learning, working and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all its members are respected, and which is free from discrimination, prejudice, intimidation and all forms of harassment including bullying.

This Policy means that all students and employees of ECC have the right to study or work in an environment free from discrimination, prejudice and all forms of harassment or bullying. ECC is committed to a programme of action to ensure that its policy is implemented and monitored at an organisational and individual level.

4. Scope of the Policy

The policy reflects current relevant legislation and related guidance.

ECC has a Disability Statement that sets out its commitment to meeting the needs of students with disabilities and learning difficulties.

This Equal Opportunities Policy incorporates ECC's Race Equality Policy, and all relevant aspects of this policy therefore apply to race equality.

This policy will impact on ECC's self-assessment, strategic planning and resource allocation processes. For students and prospective students this policy will impact directly on:

student rights, student responsibilities, support services, admissions arrangements, initial assessment, retention, achievement, progression, assessment arrangements, academic appeals, complaints, behaviour, discipline, learning and teaching, curriculum facilities and student feedback arrangements. For employees and prospective employees this policy will ensure there are fair personnel policies and procedures. Such policies and procedures will include those affecting employee rights and responsibilities as well as those relating to: recruitment and selection, job evaluation, contracts, conditions of service, induction, capability, line management and appraisal, all forms of leave, promotion, training and development, grievance, discipline, harassment and bullying, termination, absence, and employee feedback arrangements.

5. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out clear guidance for ECC regarding key principles, structures and monitoring arrangements in relation to equality, the promotion of good relations between people of different religions, nationalities and racial groups and the elimination of prejudice, unfair and unlawful discrimination.

This policy is implemented through ECC structures and procedures, supported by an annual equality review by the Directors.

6. Key Equality Principles

ECC believes that the development of an inclusive environment embracing diversity in all its aspects is essential to the achievement of its mission.

ECC will work to create a community which is tolerant and respectful of others and where acts of disrespect and displays of intolerance are not accepted.

ECC rejects and will seek to challenge all forms of prejudice, racism and unfair or unlawful discrimination, whether intentional or not.

ECC will treat students and staff with respect and dignity and seek to provide an environment free from harassment, prejudice, unfair and unlawful discrimination and victimisation.

ECC will ensure that no job applicant or employee will be disadvantaged, or treated less favourably, because of conditions or requirements not related to the job.

Reasonable adjustments will be made to policies, arrangements, facilities and premises to ensure equal access for disabled students and staff and prospective students and staff.

To ensure fair treatment, student related policies and procedures will be regularly reviewed and their impact assessed. They will be amended where necessary. Such policies and procedures will include those set out above in section 4 of this policy.

To ensure fair employment practice, personnel policies and procedures will be regularly reviewed and their impact assessed. Where necessary they will be amended. Such policies and procedures will include those set out in section 4 of this policy.

To ensure that this policy is effective, and to maximise staff and student commitment to it, ECC undertakes to work in partnership with recognised trades unions, student representatives and with staff and students generally, in its development and implementation.

7. Responsibilities and Structures

ECC recognises its responsibility for equality issues and designates the Principal as having overall responsibility for ensuring the implementation of this policy.

The Principal may designate a named senior post-holder to lead on equality issues, including the promotion of good relations between people of different religions and racial groups, the elimination of prejudice and unfair and unlawful discrimination.

All directors and managers are responsible for implementing this policy in their area of service delivery and in their day to day work.

All members of staff are responsible for implementing this policy in the delivery of their day-to-day work.

The processes of staff recruitment, induction, line management, training and development will support the practical application of this policy.

Management action, including formal staff disciplinary procedures, will be used where there are serious or repeated breaches of this policy and/or where this constitutes direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

Students are responsible for supporting ECC's equality policy in their relationships with fellow students, staff and visitors. ECC will take action, including disciplinary action, where there are serious breaches of the policy, including harassment or victimisation. The processes of student induction, the content of learning programmes and the design of the student activities' programmes, will support the practical application of this policy.

ECC recognises that the implementation of this policy requires time and expertise. A range of measures will be used to support equality work. These will include the use of staff development, the buying in of external expertise, the funding of specific developments, staff abatement to work on special projects and working with external partners.

ECC's Directors will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy.

8. General

If students believe they have been treated unfairly, due to prejudice, racism, or unfair or unlawful discrimination, they should, in the first instance, try to resolve the matter using ECC's complaints procedure. Advice and guidance for students is available through personal tutors and student support. If employees believe they have been treated unfairly, due to prejudice, racism or unfair or unlawful discrimination, they should, in the first instance, try to resolve the matter using ECC's grievance process. Advice and guidance for staff is available through the line management process, human resources and external agencies.

9. Policy Review

There will be an annual review of this policy to ensure it continues to reflect legislative requirements, best practice and the needs of ECC.

10. Communication of this Policy and Related Outcomes

This policy, and any associated information, will be communicated through the induction process for new students and staff and available at the administration office and online.

ECC's commitment to equality will be demonstrated through staff and student interaction, the quality of services provided by ECC, performance indicators relating to students and staff and internal and external publicity.

The development and use of curriculum materials and the focus of displays and exhibitions provided by ECC will highlight its commitment to equality and promotion and encouragement of good relations

between people of different religions, nationalities and racial groups.

Outcomes of monitoring exercises relating to this policy will be disseminated to students, staff and, if required, relevant external organisations.

11. Monitoring

Progress will be monitored by assessing what has been achieved through an annual review. The student profile will be monitored in terms of age, ethnicity, and gender along with their college experience, success and progression.

ECC will monitor workforce information on the basis of ethnicity, gender and age and an annual review will be published with this and other relevant information. All monitoring details will be processed confidentially.

Reviews of policy and reports on progress will be the responsibility of the Directors.

Monitoring will be carried out in accordance with recommendations from the Commission for Racial Equality, the Hounslow Race Equality Council, the Equal Opportunities Commission, the Disability Rights Commission, the Learning and Skills Council and other relevant bodies.

Appendix - Legislative framework

The following legislation is relevant to the Policy:

- Sex Discrimination Act Race Relations and Amendment Act
- Equal Pay Act Disability Discrimination Act
- Human Rights Act Legislation relating to part time employees
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act Legislation relating to fixed term employees
- Employment Equality (Age and Religion & Belief) Regulations 2003
- EC Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003

Reviewed: June 2022