

HARPER ADAMS UNIVERSITY

Single Equality Scheme 2017 – 2019

Introduction from the Vice-Chancellor

People are central to the success of any higher education institution and consequently, Harper Adams University wishes to recruit and retain staff and students of the highest calibre. We are specialist in our subject base, and in the range of research and knowledge transfer work that we undertake. We have excellent and committed staff who are supported by the Board of Governors. Both parties are committed to providing a high quality student experience. Only by ensuring equality of opportunity can we be confident that we recruit from the widest available pool of talented individuals.

In order to do this we must maintain and regularly review policies and procedures that serve to perpetuate the friendly and caring environment we provide for both our students, staff and members of our Board of Governors

Dr David Llewellyn
Vice-Chancellor

Summary

This document is the University's 2017 - 2019 Single Equality Scheme and builds on the University's previous Equality Schemes in operation since 2011 through which we have worked to raise the profile of Equality and Diversity matters within the University.

The University's objectives on equality demonstrate how it plans to meet the aims of the General Equality Duty across all of the protected characteristics. The objectives are aligned with the University's strategic priorities and can be found at Annex 1 to this document.

We will ensure that the University continues to promote an inclusive institutional culture that recognises the benefits of a diverse learning community for students and staff and the development of the institution. The arrangements set out in this document apply to all aspects of the University's work, including arrangements for the nomination of new members of the Board of Governors.

This scheme is to be read in conjunction with the University's Equality and Diversity Policy.

References

In order to ensure that this document is fully compliant with UK legislation we have sought information and guidance from a variety of sources. These are;

- The Equality Challenge Unit – (ECU)
- The Equality and Human Rights Commission – (EHRC)
- The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service – (ACAS)
- The Department for Business Innovation and Skills – (BIS)
- The Universities and Colleges Employers Association – (UCEA)
- The Government Equalities Office – (GEO)
- The Equal Opportunities Commission – (EOC)
- The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development – (CIPD)

Introduction

The Equality Act 2010 came into force from October 2010. Its fundamental purpose is to bring together all existing discrimination protection into a single Act, with a view to ensuring consistency and clarity over how employees and job applicants are protected against incidents of discrimination in the

workplace. Its secondary purpose is to strengthen discrimination law and to promote equality in the workplace.

The new Act brings together over 116 separate pieces of legislation into one single Act which provides a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all. This simplified, strengthened and harmonised existing legislation and protects individuals from unfair treatment and promotes a fair and more equal society. This legislation covers employment, facilities, goods and services and education, including the admission and treatment of students.

The Public Sector Equality Duty covers eight protected characteristics, which are: (in alphabetical order)

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

It also applies to marriage and civil partnership, but only in respect of the requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination in employment.

On 5 April 2011 the Public Sector Equality Duty came into force in England. This duty replaced the existing Race, Gender and Disability duties.

What is the Equality Duty?

The Public Sector Equality Duty consists of a general equality duty, (April 2011), and the specific duties which became law on the 10th September 2011.

In summary, those subject to the General Equality Duty must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic; and
- foster good relations between people from different groups.

The specific duties require public bodies to publish relevant, proportionate information showing compliance with the Equality Duty, and to set equality objectives.

The Aim of the Scheme

Our aim is to embed equality in the culture and systems of the organisation by ensuring that policy making, service delivery, employment practice and appointment of Governors are all equality orientated. Policies and procedures that appear neutral can have significantly different effects upon certain groups of people or individuals. This often contributes not only to greater inequality but also to overall poor policy outcomes.

Key changes associated with the Equality Act 2010

There have been changes made to the definition of direct discrimination which now extends protection based on association and perception. This is already applicable to race, sexual orientation and religion but will now include age, disability, gender re-assignment, sex and pregnancy and maternity. This means that those providing care for someone due to a protected characteristic would be protected because of their association. Perceptive discrimination is discrimination against a person because the discriminator thinks that the person possesses that characteristic, even if they do not.

The definitions of two specific protected characteristics have also changed. The definition of disability is extended to cover people who have had a disability in the past and the definition of gender reassignment has been extended to cover people who have proposed, started or completed a process to change their sex but not under medical supervision. Indirect discrimination has also been extended to cover these characteristics.

There are now limitations on the use of health related questions during recruitment and selection which make it unlawful without objective justification to ask about the health of a job applicant either before offering work to an applicant or before shortlisting an applicant.

What is a Single Equality Scheme?

A Statutory Requirement

The Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies, including higher education institutions to lead by example in prompting equality in the workplace. All public sector organisations will be under a single equality duty to demonstrate that they are achieving equality in the workforce across all the protected characteristics.

Involving Other People in the Development of the Scheme

The initial Single Equality Scheme since 2011 was developed in consultation with the University's Staff Consultative Group. The revised Single Equality Scheme has also been developed in consultation with this group and also in consultation with the University's Equality and Diversity Working Group which comprises members from both the staff and the student community. A member of the one recognised trade union also forms part of the group.

Responsibilities for Implementing and Monitoring the Scheme

The ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the general duty is met lies with the University's Board of Governors. The Board will also be responsible for ensuring that adequate resources are provided to enable the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation for all protected characteristics. The Board will receive an annual report in the form of an assessment of progress against the Equality Objectives, presented by the University Secretary. The Head of Human Resources will co-ordinate input from the Human Resources Officer with particular responsibility for Equality and Diversity, Student Services Manager, Academic Registrar and President of the Students' Union as appropriate.

The Staffing Committee will continue to monitor, on behalf of the Board, the implementation of the Scheme as it relates to University staff. It will be the role of the Nominations Committee of the Board to ensure that the arrangements for appointment of new governors are conducted in accordance with this scheme. It will receive annual reports including any of issues of concern raised with regard to any of the protected characteristics and the way in which they have been managed and resolved.

Consultation on the Scheme and its development and issues relating to the use or interpretation and progress of this policy will be considered by the Staff Consultative Group and the University/University and College Union, Joint Consultative Negotiating Committee (for staff) and meetings held by the Vice-Chancellor with the Students Union Executive, which occur at regular intervals throughout the academic year (for students). External consultation will be undertaken with relevant local groups as these are identified and relationships with them are developed.

Evidence Required for Monitoring the Scheme

Our annual reports are expected to include (but not be limited to) the following:

- A progress report on mainstreaming equality in strategy and policy development by way of a report on continuing progress against key outcomes from the Equality Objectives that form part of this Scheme.

- Any developments in governance and management of the Scheme
- A general section on 'Improving Equality' which will cover aspects of:
 - Students/Staff
 - Admissions (based on recruitment)/ Recruitment and selection
 - Progression and level of achievement/ Promotion
 - Curriculum development/ Training and development
 - Use and access to student support systems/ Use and access to staff support systems
 - Disciplinary matters
 - Student complaints and their resolution/ Grievances and their resolution
 - Confirmation that appointment of Governors has been carried out in accordance with the scheme

Monitoring is not intended to be an end in itself, but to produce information to be used in planning and decision-making in support of the implementation of this Scheme, and to assess the impact of the Scheme on the recruitment, development and retention of students and staff. Quantitative data will be supplemented by qualitative information gathered, where possible, from student and staff surveys. Feedback on the continued development of the scheme will be provided to staff and students.

Publication of the Scheme and Awareness Raising

The Scheme will be incorporated in:

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| • Staff handbooks | - for all University staff |
| • Student handbooks | - for all University students |
| • The University's web site | - for enquiries made to the University |
| • The University portal | - for reference by staff |

The University will continue to arrange for Equality and Diversity to be included in Freshers' talks given to students at the start of the academic year. The University will also continue its training programme to support staff and students in general awareness-raising about Equality and Diversity and its implications for the work of the University including in particular the integration of an e-learning programme into a mandatory training programme taken by all staff and first year students.

The outcomes and assessment of progress against the objectives of the Scheme, associated monitoring reports and any alterations to the legislation or our Equality and Diversity Policy that might lead to a substantial change to the University's Scheme, will be published annually in internal documents for circulation to, and accessed by University staff and students, and on the University's web site for external audiences. The Single Equality Scheme will be updated every three years.

Equality Analysis

What is Equality Analysis?

Equality Analysis (EA) is a way for Universities to check that their policies, practices, functions, procedures and services do not disadvantage, exclude or otherwise unlawfully discriminate against certain people or groups of people. An equality analysis helps the University to identify whether policies have or may have a differential or adverse impact on certain groups which are protected by law against discrimination.

The process is carried out on new and existing policies and it also helps to identify where a policy can have a positive impact on the diversity of the staff and student body and help the University to fulfil its obligations as noted in the Equality Objectives which form part of this Single Equalities Scheme.

This approach to EAs will help to strengthen the work to promote equality. When carrying out an EA, both the negative and positive consequences of the proposals should be considered.

Who will conduct Equality Analysis?

EAs will be conducted where possible by the 'owner' of the policy as they will have the greatest understanding of the reasons for and operation of the policy.

An online training package is available for all staff who will be undertaking equality analyses for their respective policies. Support will also be available from the Human Resources Department.

Particular areas where the University will monitor its practices and, where necessary, make proportionate adjustments, will include:

- Partnership arrangements, where the University will make clear to partner organisations its duties under the Equality Act 2010.
- Procurement, where the University will be expected to ensure that the procurement process takes account of the requirements of this Scheme, and that contractors/suppliers understand and comply with the duties required of the University.
- Communications, including the way that the University communicates to students and staff (in all forms including electronic media) in such a way that complies with the spirit of this scheme;
- Managers and Supervisors will be expected to be familiar with the provisions of the Scheme and its implications for the areas that they manage or supervise.

Making this Scheme Accessible

Information about our Single Equality Scheme can be made available in other languages and formats upon request, such as large print, Braille, audio cassette and computer disk. If you would like to receive information in a different language or another format then please contact us on telephone number 01952 815089 or by e-mail (for staff) to jcameron@harper-adams.ac.uk or (for students) to ahind@harper-adams.ac.uk

Further Information

Further information for staff or prospective staff about the University's approach to equality can be obtained from the University's Human Resources Office, the contact details for which are provided in the above paragraph.

Further information about the specific provisions for students, can be obtained from the University Registry provided in the above paragraph also.

