

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Introduction: Scope of procedure and guidance

CECOS is committed to creating an environment and offering a service which provides equality of opportunity and freedom from all discrimination to all stakeholders including students, staff, partner institutions and external organisations. The College aims to ensure that everyone can expect to be treated on an equal basis and with respect. Equality and diversity is expected to be embedded in all college activities.

CECOS recognises its obligation under the Equality Act 2010, Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, Employment Rights Act 2010, Employment Act 2010, The Children's Act 1989/2004, Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and the Race Relations Act 1976 (and all their relevant updated amendments) and supports the spirit and intent of the related codes of practice.

CECOS is committed to creating a setting where everyone, whatever their circumstances and background is:

- Fully respected
- Listened to and encouraged to give their views
- Feels welcome and is treated in a friendly way
- Treated in an equal way
- Has equality of opportunity
- Has full access to all activities wherever possible.

The College does not tolerate any form of discrimination or treatment which favours individuals or groups on the basis of:

- sexual orientation or preference
- learning difficulties and all disabilities
- religious observance or belief
- race, creed, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- marital or parental status
- gender
- age

Students, staff, senior managers and other stakeholders are expected to behave in a way which makes other people feel accepted, comfortable and safe. CECOS values everyone as an individual and celebrates diversity by encouraging people to be successful and to set and strive towards their own goals.

The College will seek and provide suitable and relevant Equal Opportunities Training for all staff as and when necessary. CECOS will also ensure all learners understand the principles and expectations of equality and respecting diversity. CECOS will treat any unfair and discriminatory conduct by any member of the College, including staff and students, as a disciplinary offence.

The CECOS Equality and Diversity policies, guidance and procedures reflect the expectations for standards and quality of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, and in particular the principles and expectations for Standards and Quality set out in respect of:

- Admission, recruitment and widening access
- Concerns, complaints and appeals
- Enabling student achievement
- Learning and Teaching
- Student engagement

1. Aims and Objectives

The College will work to ensure that:

- Equality of opportunity is embedded in all policies, practices and decision-making and evaluation processes;
- A Single Equality Scheme is published and monitored to further ensure that all stakeholders are treated fairly
- The teaching and learning and work environment ethos values differences and treats every individual on their own merits
- Flexible opportunities are offered which meets the needs of local learners in all locations to enable them to realise their potential
- All staff are clear about standards and strategies to meet diverse learner needs and are equipped to respond effectively
- The fullest participation of students and staff is secured, including respect for others.

In addition, the College will ensure that:

- Issues of under-representation are addressed and where appropriate incorporated into equality and diversity measures
- There are clear procedures for challenging discrimination, harassment and all unacceptable behaviours
- Analysis is undertaken to identify equality gaps, and that appropriate strategies are developed, implemented and evaluated
- Comprehensive feedback systems are developed to capture learner, staff and stakeholder feedback and perceptions of CECOS performance and potential areas for improvement
- Positive images of achievement from all sections of society are recognised and celebrated
- No member of the College community is unfairly disadvantaged because of their social, cultural, religious, ethnic or economic background.

Job and programme applications are welcomed from all sections of society and selection is made purely on the basis of specified capabilities, skills and experience. Exceptions are only permitted in the event that there is a genuine occupational requirement which is recognised under law.

2. Defined areas and key responsibilities

a. Inclusiveness.

Inclusiveness is central to all decisions and resulting actions of College staff.

Staff and the College committees/boards are responsible for ensuring that everyone is aware of and meets their statutory responsibilities. Students are made aware of and expected to behave in a way that is consistent with, the College's equality and diversity policy. Individual breaches of the policy will be dealt with under the student or staff disciplinary procedures. The College will support individuals who have a justified complaint. The whistle-blowing procedure may be one mechanism in which an issue could be raised, and through which individuals may be safeguarded.

The Managing Director along with the Principal and the Senior Management Team is responsible for monitoring this policy and will provide reports to the Board as appropriate.

3. Position statement.

CECOS College will:

- Work actively to create a supportive and inclusive environment for all. The College will ensure that it enables full participation and success in learning and employment and will actively combat discrimination in every area of College life. The College will not allow the harassment or unfavourable treatment of any group.
- Recognise that people are often treated unfairly in terms of education, training and employment because of their gender, the College aims to eradicate gender discrimination and to actively promote gender equality.
- Recognise the importance of listening and responding to the needs of every individual involved with the College. We understand the potential damage that may be caused by gender, ethnic, age and religious belief-based discrimination and will take positive action to break this cycle.

4. Policy statements.

The College will:

- Oppose sexism and be committed to taking positive action to identify and remove sexism from College life
- Be proactive in the development of equality of opportunity for all throughout their College career;
- Monitor and review the participation and performance of male and female students and redress inequalities
- Positively encourage non-traditional learners to consider areas of study and work to minimise gender, ethnic, religious, economic or other stereotyping
- Not tolerate sexual harassment in any area of College life. Any incidences of sexual harassment will be vigorously challenged through College disciplinary procedures
- Not tolerate discrimination on the grounds of gender re-assignment towards either trans-gendered or transsexual people
- Ensure that policies, procedures and opportunities for professional development will be family-friendly to encourage full participation.

5. Sexual orientation

The College will ensure that no individual member of the staff or student is targeted or treated differently as a result of their sexual orientation. This is a matter of individual choice and should not impact on work within the College. In line with the Supreme Court Judgement the College will register students as shown on their official documents which will relate to gender at birth. This does not impact on how transgender students choose to be known.

The College will not tolerate homophobic harassment in any area of College life, and will make this explicit to new students and staff. Sexual harassment and discrimination will be challenged through College disciplinary procedures.

5.1 Position and policy statement

The College is working actively to create a supportive and inclusive environment for all which is conducive to excellent practice in education, training and employment. The College actively combats discrimination, sexual harassment or unfavourable treatment in every area of its operations to ensure the fair and equitable treatment of all students, staff and other stakeholders.

The College recognizes that people are often treated unfairly in terms of education, training and employment because of their sexuality. The College's aim is to eradicate discrimination on the grounds of sexuality and to promote equality of opportunity for all. The College encourages positive acceptance of gay, lesbian, bisexual, gender re-assignment and heterosexual people.

6. Disability

6.1 Position and policy statement

The College fully accepts its responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act Part 4 (and any subsequent amendments thereto) and is committed to making any reasonable adjustments within its business activities that will promote equal access and opportunity for students, employees and members of the public with disabilities and/or learning difficulties using College facilities. In all cases applications are welcomed from individuals with disabilities and support is provided, where possible, to accommodate individual needs.

The College asks student to declare any difficulties and disabilities as part of their application process and utilizes feedback to enhance services and support.

The College will:

- Aim to identify and eliminate attitudes, practices and procedures that discriminate against people on the grounds of disability and/or learning difficulty
- Is committed to ensuring an inclusive, professional and friendly environment for students, employees and members of the public with disabilities and/or learning difficulties.

The College will ensure that all disabled learners and learners with learning difficulties have access to:

- Appropriate opportunities to disclose disability and/or learning difficulty throughout their time as a learner at the College
- Flexible and inclusive learning opportunities
- Assessment of need to ensure that any reasonable adjustments to College provision are made and are appropriate to the individual
- Direct and indirect, student-centred learning support is made available to enable access to College provision including specialist equipment and technology where possible
- Provision of Information in relevant formats to ensure equal access to information on support.

The College will ensure that all potential and current employees with disabilities and/or learning difficulties have access to:

- Appropriate opportunities to disclose disability and/or learning difficulty throughout their time as an employee at the College
- Employment opportunities including promotion and are not refused due specifically to a disability and/or learning difficulty
- Specialist equipment and technology and other reasonable adjustments to allow equal opportunity as an employee
- Information in relevant formats to ensure equal access
- The College will maintain strong links with external agencies to ensure the provision of appropriate and effective support for staff with disabilities and/or learning difficulties.

7. Religious observance or belief

7.1 Position and policy statement

The College recognises the need to ensure compliance with the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations (and any subsequent amendments there to) under which it is unlawful to discriminate against employees, on the grounds of religion or similar belief.

Students also have the right not to be discriminated against on the basis of religion or belief. The College defines religion or belief as being any named religion, religious belief or similar philosophical belief.

The College will **NOT**:

- Discriminate directly against anyone. That is, to treat them less favourably than others because of their religion or beliefs and practices.
- Discriminate indirectly against anyone. That is to apply a criterion, provision or practice which disadvantages people of a particular religion or belief unless it can be objectively justified.
- Subject anyone to harassment. Harassment is unwanted conduct that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment having regard to all the circumstances and the perception of the victim.

- Victimise anyone because they have made, or intend to make a complaint or allegation, or have given or intend to give evidence in relation to a complaint of discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief.

8. Race and ethnicity

8.1 Position and policy statement

The College actively supports and welcomes diversity amongst its students, staff and visitors, recognising the particular contributions to the achievement of its mission that can be made by individuals from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences.

The College will:

- Promote equality of opportunity and good race relations between persons of different groups avoiding racial discrimination, whether direct or indirect.
- Recognise its responsibilities under the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Equality Act 2010.
- Actively tackle racial discrimination and promote racial equality and good race relations.
- Encourage, support and help all students and staff to reach their potential.
- Work with other institutions, local communities and other groups to tackle racial discrimination and to encourage and promote good practice in achieving race equality.
- Assess the effects of the policy on staff and students from different racial groups.
- Monitor, by racial group, the admission and progress of students, and the recruitment and career development of staff, where race or ethnicity is declared.
- Promote a race equality approach inside and outside the College.

9. Age

9.1 Position and policy statement

The College recognises that people are often discriminated against and stereotyped on the basis of their age, and the assumptions which underpin judgements about an individual's potential behaviour and preferences.

The College will ensure that fair treatment is embedded with the College ethos, and that risks of discrimination are identified and dealt with. The College is clear that:

- Prejudice and discrimination on the grounds of age (ageism) have no place in an educational establishment.
- There should be no discrimination employment on the grounds of age, subject to normal arrangements for employees to retire. The College will not discriminate against students on the grounds of age, except where age is a mandatory criteria for entry to a course.
- The value of lifelong learning is recognised and that an individual's life experiences add to their role as a member of the College community and their personal learning experience.
- That age equality is actively promoted and supported to enable educational achievement for people of all ages.
- Arbitrary age barriers to educational access are removed to facilitate the realisation of individual potential and success.

- It provides learning experiences which meet the needs of particular cohorts.
- It actively promotes up-skilling and re-training programmes for those in paid employment or who wish to re-enter training.
- It develops teaching and learning and support strategies to meet the particular needs of learners/students from different age groups across all levels of provision.
- It promotes positive images of achievement by people of all ages and which recognise and celebrate the knowledge and experience which people bring to their learning throughout life;
- It welcomes job applications from all age groups and select on the basis of specified skills and abilities.

The College Equality and Diversity procedures and guidance should be referenced in conjunction with other CECOS policies:

- 1. The Complaints Policy**
2. Academic Appeals Policy
3. The Widening Participation Policy
4. Student Admissions Policy
5. Academic Misconduct and Unfair Practices Policy
6. The Staff Recruitment Policy
7. Student Engagement Strategy
8. Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy and Procedures
9. Staff Disciplinary Procedures.