Equality Policy & Public Sector Equality Duty

Introduction

The Equality Act 2010 harmonised and replaced most existing equalities legalisation. It came into force on 10 October 2010, and for Higher Education Institutions (hereafter 'HEIs'), covering their functions as an employer and as a provider of education and services.

Jesus College is considered to be an HEI under the Act.

The Act covers nine ‘protected characteristics’: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership (but only in relation to employment), pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. Some of these remain the same as under previous legislation; for others, protection has been extended or reinforced.

The Act introduced the Public Sector Equality Duty (‘the general duty’), which came into force on 5 April 2011, and replaced the previous separate equality duties for race, disability and gender.

‘Specific duties’, which aim to show how HEIs are responding to the general duty, were commenced on 10 September 2011. Institutions must meet both the general duty and the specific duties.

The general duty requires HEIs to have due regard in decision-making to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, victimisation and harassment and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
- advance equality of opportunity between people from different protected groups, including:
  - removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics;
  - taking steps to meet the needs of people with protected characteristics
  - encouraging people with protected characteristics to participate in areas where their representation is low.
- foster good relations between people from different protected groups, including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
Having ‘due regard’ means consciously considering the three aims listed above as part of its decision-making processes and when it is reviewing or developing policies. Due regarding for ‘advancing equality’ involves removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics; taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people; and encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

‘Fostering good relations’ involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups.

The specific duties require HEIs to:

- publish, no later than 31 January 2012, information to demonstrate their compliance with the general duty, and subsequently at intervals no greater than one year from the last publication;
- prepare and publish one or more specific and measurable objective(s) that it thinks it should achieve to meet any of the three aims of the equality duty. The objective(s) must be published not later than 6 April 2012 and subsequently at intervals of no greater than four years;
- publish information and objectives in a manner that is accessible to the public: this may be within another published document.

The College’s Aims

Jesus College welcomes diversity among its applicants, students, staff, and visitors, recognising the contributions to the achievement of the College’s objectives which can be made by individuals from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences.

Jesus College aims to provide an inclusive environment which promotes equality, values diversity and maintains an environment in which the rights and dignity of all its students and staff are respected. 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 students or staff.
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 Jesus 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; disability\(^1\); 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).

Jesus College requires that all staff are offered equal opportunities within employment and that entry into employment with the College and progression within employment will be determined only by personal merit and the application of criteria which are related to the duties of each particular post.

The College supports the aims of the University’s Integrated Equality Policy, available at [http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/missionstatement/integratedequalitypolicy/](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/missionstatement/integratedequalitypolicy/)

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 students, this policy applies, but is not limited to, admissions, to teaching, learning and research provision, to scholarships, grants and prizes 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 members to take 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. The College regards any

\(^1\) Under the Quality 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.
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 guidance\(^2\);
- 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 Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech; Code of Practice on Harassment; and Complaints and Appeals Procedures.

These can be read online at [www.jesus.ox.ac.uk/about/public-documents](http://www.jesus.ox.ac.uk/about/public-documents).

The College supports the aims of the University’s Integrated Equality Policy, available at [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/missionstatement/integratedequalitypolicy/](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/missionstatement/integratedequalitypolicy/).

**The College’s Responsibilities**

The Governing Body of Jesus College has overall responsibility for setting strategic objectives and for taking all reasonable steps to ensure equality of opportunity and the

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\(^2\) 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.
prevention of discrimination, harassment and victimisation of staff, students and visitors in their relationship with the College.

The College’s committees which report to the Governing Body are responsible for the development, implementation and review of policies and practices to support the College’s equality policy in relation to students, staff, resources, contractors and suppliers, visitors and others closely associated with the College.

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. In particular, the Academic Director is responsible for academic staff and students and the HR Director for non-academic staff.

**Monitoring and Audit**

Institutions of Higher Education have a duty to collect and analyse data for equality monitoring purposes, in order to measure the effectiveness of policies. Current Equal Opportunities data regarding recruitment monitoring held at Jesus is incomplete but information on age, gender, nationality, disability and ethnicity is collected for academic and non-academic posts.

*Undergraduate and graduate admissions*

The college has subscribed to the University’s Common Framework for Admissions, whereby data on undergraduate and graduate applications is collected and monitored by the University. It is also considered by Academic Committee.

Undergraduate statistics are available here:

[http://www.ox.ac.uk/about_the_university/facts_and_figures/undergraduate_admissions_statistics/index.html](http://www.ox.ac.uk/about_the_university/facts_and_figures/undergraduate_admissions_statistics/index.html)

Postgraduate statistics are available here:

[http://www.ox.ac.uk/about_the_university/facts_and_figures/graduate_admissions_statistics/index.html](http://www.ox.ac.uk/about_the_university/facts_and_figures/graduate_admissions_statistics/index.html)

The College gathers data on the profile and progress of accepted students, including information on ethnicity, disability and gender, which is considered by Academic Committee.
The College’s committees meet regularly to consult on, and develop, the College’s equality policies and practices. In addition, equal opportunities monitoring data is reported to the Governing Body.

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

**Equality Objectives**

As part of the College’s commitment to the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty, we are currently developing measurable equality objectives to demonstrate the College’s compliance with the specific duties of the Act. The College will review its progress against these objectives on a regular basis and update this document. The following equality objectives were previously agreed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Review date &amp; frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>To improve the College's collection of staff recruitment data</td>
<td>To advance equality of opportunity between people from different protected groups, identify areas for improvement, and engage with groups of people with protected characteristics to encourage participation in areas where representation is low</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>To review and update the Harassment Policy and Procedure for staff</td>
<td>To meet the aim of the general equality duty to eliminate discrimination, victimisation and harassment by establishing clear and fair procedures by which any complaint about a breach may be investigated and resolved.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>To review and improve accessibility to the College</td>
<td>To remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by</td>
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<tr>
<td>for those with disabilities</td>
<td>people due to their protected characteristics; To take steps to meet the needs of people with protected characteristics; to encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in areas where their representation is low.</td>
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The College is currently working to revise its Equality objectives and will update this document before the end of the academic year 2015/16.

Jesus College January 2016