



Stratford College London

## Equal Opportunities and Fair Assessment Policy

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# **Equal Opportunities and Fair Assessment Policy**



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## **QAA Context**

This Policy is concerned with the provision of a learning environment suitable for all students. It notes the need for special provision for some students as a result of disability.

## **Equal Opportunities and Fair Assessment Policy Aim**

The aim of this policy is to ensure that the assessment system and practices do not limit or discriminate against individuals on the grounds of colour, race, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, ethnic or national origin, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, age or disability.

The College will act against any possible discriminatory or biased practices and will positively promote access to learning and assessment.

In order to do this the College will in its recruitment of staff and students ensure:

- that all its marketing materials display positive images of different ethnic minority groups and people with different abilities and disabilities and people of different ages and gender;
- that all advertising does not directly or indirectly discriminate against anyone, except where legal requirements make this necessary;
- that advertising targets all groups and types of people, as much as reasonably possible;
- that all recruitment of staff and students complies with legal requirements and that our practice and decisions are fair and consistent;
- that all staff has access to employment opportunities, training and information regardless of their age, sex, colour, creed, race, religion, sexual orientation or beliefs;
- that all our staff will abide by the equal opportunities requirements of the Joint Awarding Bodies.



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### **Equal opportunities in the learning provision**

The College's aim is to provide a framework which promotes equal opportunities for those who have special needs arising from race, gender, religion, disability or learning disability. In adhering to this philosophy, it is intended to make the following provisions through course delivery:

- Students will be made aware of the precise requirements for every qualification and course at induction. Registration of students does not occur until after induction, therefore Students will not be penalised if they decide to opt out of the course.
- All Students will have the opportunity to undergo a diagnostic test to ascertain the need for additional learning support.
- No upper or lower age limits will be specified, other than that published by the awarding body for assessment and award of a qualification.
- Any Student with special needs will be strongly encouraged to pursue units of competence in which they have a reasonable chance of attaining the required standard. The College assessment staff will support those who require assistance in obtaining appropriate learning opportunities and assistance.
- Any discriminatory or unfair behaviour displayed by Students towards other Students or staff will not be tolerated. Such behaviour may result in the Student being asked to leave the course.
- Curriculum delivery and learning materials will not discriminate against any person or group.

### **Disability Disclosure Form**

In order for the College to offer appropriate support to its Students, it must have notice of any and all issues that might affect their academic progress. Only then can it offer appropriate internally generated support and/or referral to appropriate external agencies.

All applicants are required to complete this form (see page 13), whether or not a disability is declared, and to submit it alongside the Application Form.



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### **Special provision for Students with special needs**

The College believes that all Students should be supported in their learning, despite any special needs they may have.

#### **Special needs could include the following:**

- Students with physical impairments e.g.: Wheelchair bound, deaf, blind;
- People at the extremes of the workforce age group;
- People who have not studied for a while;
- Students with dyslexia and other learning difficulties;
- Students who lack confidence;
- Students with special needs and requirements will be supported by their Assessor, Mentor and Internal Verifier or Tutor;
- Students who have difficulty with writing can be supported to complete their course through dictation or oral tapes or receive basic skills tutoring and support by referral to a selected basic skills co-coordinator;
- Students with dyslexia, physical impairments or learning difficulties may be allowed more time to complete their course than the usual time scale according to the regulations of the Awarding Body.

Referrals to specialist help and support organisations will be arranged as appropriate. Students who require it can be provided with handbooks and centre information on appropriate media.

- We will strive to enable Students who work part-time to obtain their qualification by providing opportunities for assessment through the employment of Assessors who can work flexible hours.
- Where possible, the College offers Students the opportunity to attend alternative study days to enable greater access to learning, when it may otherwise be difficult because of working hours or children.
- All Students will be made aware of, and have access to, the centre appeals procedure.
- Students can appeal against any practice that they feel is unfair through the centre appeals procedure.



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### **Anti-discriminatory guidance for Assessors and assessment staff**

- Where evidence collection includes observation of the Students working relationships, the Assessor's role is explained clearly and accurately and, where practical, the consent of others is obtained.
- Arrangements for maintaining the confidentiality of evidence are agreed with the Student and others affected. Work products and photographs can be used as evidence if permission of those affected is obtained in writing.
- Appropriate arrangements are made to maximise access for Students regardless of their age, race, class, creed, culture, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, political beliefs or any other factors which result in unfair discrimination.
- Cases are reported promptly to the Programme Leader when the evidence gathering method is found to be discriminatory in any way.
- Students who disagree with the assessment decision are given accurate and timely advice on how to appeal.
- Information and advice is provided in a manner which respects the dignity of the Student and the confidentiality of the assessment process.
- The College Management and Programme Leader are responsible for ensuring access to fair assessment by providing guidance and support to Assessors to ensure discrimination does not occur either intentionally or inadvertently and make sure that assessment methods do not introduce requirements that are not included in the national standard.
- All Assessors and Internal Verifiers will be regularly appraised to ensure that anti discriminatory practice is upheld at all times.
- If in doubt of any issue relating to Equal Opportunities the College will seek the appropriate expert advice to ensure practice is fair and meets legal requirements.
- No staff member will discriminate, or treat any other person unfairly, at any time. Any such occurrences will not be tolerated and will be treated very seriously under the disciplinary procedure.
- Should any staff member be witness to, or be aware of, any behaviour or practice which they believe to be unfair or discriminatory must report the concerns immediately.



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### **Monitoring and review of equal opportunities**

- All staff, students and applicants will be asked to complete an anonymous equal opportunities questionnaire. These will be audited to monitor recruitment practices.
- Students' completion rates will be audited to identify any shortfalls in our service provision in order to make any necessary improvements.
- The College actively encourages staff to provide feedback on practice and make recommendations for improvements through regular staff meetings and established communication channels.
- The College regularly reviews all policies, marketing material, activities and training materials to ensure they are up to date and compliant with good practice, and legal requirements.
- The College actively seeks feedback from Students on the training provision and the meeting of special needs through course evaluations, which will be monitored, and audited.
- The College keeps up to date with any changes in best practice and ensure that necessary changes are made to meet these standards
- The College is strictly monitored by the awarding bodies and will, at all times comply with their policies and requirements.
- The College regularly self-evaluates practice and makes any necessary improvements or changes to service delivery.

### **Review and Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed, evaluated and updated annually to constantly improve fair access and assessment practice and equal opportunities for all people affected by it.



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### **Disability and Equality Strategy: A Policy Statement for Employees and Students**

#### **Introduction:**

The College is committed to developing a first class working environment for its employees and educational environment for its students. Any disability or long-term illness is considered a serious issue and employees and students with disabilities are treated fairly and equally in the organization. As an equal opportunities employer the College is committed to:

- Promoting a constructive organisational atmosphere where all people can work and learn with dignity and in an independent manner;
- Providing continuous support for people with special needs;
- Establishing and maintaining “Best Practice” on disability issues.

#### **Aims**

Disability is seen as a sensitive issue and the College will work to actively remove the many social barriers which hinder the growth of disabled people.

This policy for disabled people has been devised by keeping in view the following aims of the organisation:

- There is no discrimination on the bases of race, religion, colour or disability.
- Equality of opportunity is assured in all areas in The College.
- Individual needs for disabled people are assessed and an appropriate environment and role is offered according to the need and ability.
- The employees with disabilities are treated as active members of the organisation and their involvement in the decision-making is ensured.
- The disability services/programme is integrated in all organisational procedures, is not treated separately.
- All the employees and students with any kind of disability are treated fairly and progress in their career/studies.



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## Disability Policy

**Definition of Disability:** For the purposes of the Equality Act, 2010, 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 carry out normal day-to-day activities.

The College acknowledges that a person is more likely to be disadvantaged by social and environmental factors than by a disability itself. Disability in this context can include a wide range of issues and conditions. Typically this would be one, or combination of, the following categories:

- Specific learning difficulty - e.g. dyslexia
- Visual impairment - partial sight or blind
- Hearing loss - partial hearing or profoundly deaf
- Mobility difficulties or wheelchair user
- Has restricted use of upper limbs
- Mental health problems
- Condition that is not visible, e.g. epilepsy, sickle cell anaemia, HIV
- Condition not listed above (e.g. back injury)

The above list should not be seen as exhaustive. If an employee or student feels they have a condition that is affecting the ability to study effectively, the College Student Welfare Office should be contacted. They will provide support on disability and learning difficulties.

## The College Context

The College is committed to a policy of equal opportunities for disabled people and is creating an environment in which all individuals are able to participate fully in the academic and social life of the College. It is recognised that 'disability' covers a wide range of impairments. Different disabilities will have varying impacts on study, work and other aspects of life. Individuals may join the College with a disability or become disabled during their time at the College. Some individuals may be disabled temporarily by accident or illness.



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### **Policy Statement**

The College policy is to comply with the statutory obligations in a positive manner. The College recognises that it has clear obligations to take all reasonable steps to enable people with disabilities to share in the opportunities available to all its students. The College strives to identify barriers and obstacles which exist for disabled people and to work towards their removal. All students will be provided with the opportunity to identify themselves as having a disability on application to a programme of study and annually at registration. Applications for admission from potential students will be assessed primarily on the basis of the applicants' aptitudes, abilities and qualifications.

Students who identify themselves as having a disability will be provided with access to the appropriate advice, support and adaptations to remove barriers and obstacles and enable them to be fully included in College life. All students with a disability will be offered the opportunity to have their study and support needs assessed by the authorised disability assessment centres and appropriate facilities will be provided. Students' views will be taken into account at all times during assessment of their needs.

The College takes all reasonable steps to ensure that programmes and assessments are organised in ways which offer disabled students the best possible opportunities for equal participation and demonstration of learning outcomes. The College will also take reasonable steps to enable students who become disabled during their time at the College to continue in their course of study. As far as is reasonably practicable, and within the constraints of existing buildings; The College will ensure that premises are accessible and at all times safe for disabled students.

Members of staff will have access to appropriate information and advice, and are strongly encouraged to participate in staff development opportunities to develop awareness of disability and equality issue.

### **Confidentiality**

Information that you disclosed to staff in the Disability Services Team about your disability will generally only be shared with other staff once there is explicit consent and only to the extent that this is necessary to put support in place and make the reasonable adjustments required.

Only the required adjustments, and not the nature of the disability, will be communicated to others; and if there is no requirement for any adjustments and the Student does not wish staff to be made aware of the disability, there would be no need to communicate to others any information disclosed.



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Only in exceptional circumstances (for example, if there is risk to others) would it be necessary to disclose to others within and outside of the College details of the disability without explicit consent.

Should a situation like this occur, reasonable steps would be taken to seek permission from the Student where practicable before any information is shared.

### **Disclosure**

Students will be asked to disclose any disabilities and invited to discuss related needs when applying to The College and registering as a student. This will be handled in a secure and sensitive way.

Listings of applicants and students who have disclosed disabilities are prepared for staff with designated responsibilities for disabled students so they can contact the Student to discuss any specific adjustments required.

Whilst it is the Students responsibility to decide what the College knows about the disability, for some students who are undertaking programmes of study in professional disciplines, disclosure is a requirement of the accrediting professional body which provides a statutory licence to practise and the College must comply with this requirement.

It is therefore important that all such applicants and students respond fully to the disclosure request. If the Student chooses not to disclose their disability during admissions or registration the Student can still disclose subsequently at any stag

Apart from your disclosure, staff may become aware of a Student's disability in other ways such as academic references, during open days, when advice is sought or in casual conversation with staff. In such circumstances, students are encouraged to contact designated staff to discuss any support and adjustments might be useful to them.

With consent staff can also inform an appropriate member of staff and ask them to contact the Student.



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### **Student Welfare Office**

The Student Welfare Officer provides advice and guidance for students with physical difficulties, sensory impairments, chronic (long-term) medical conditions or specific learning difficulties and refers Students to accredited assessment centres.

The disability support service provided by the Student Welfare Office includes, but is not restricted to, special arrangements for assessments, liaison with tutors and needs assessments for students applying for support through the Disabled Students Allowance. Student Finance England and other funding bodies require that students applying for Disabled Students' Allowance are assessed for their support at an accredited centre.

### **Facilities and Support**

The College provides an inclusive service for all students. Advice and on-going support is also provided through a variety of services, including:

- Scheduling classes in rooms that are appropriate for students' needs and providing additional lecture and tutorial hours
- 
- The provision of teaching and learning materials when tutors are aware of needs.

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<b>Disability Disclosure Form</b>	
Name in full	
Date of Birth	
Signature / Electronic Agreement	
Date	

### **Disability Disclosure Form: To be completed by all applicants**

I do not have any disability that the College needs to be aware of.		<input type="checkbox"/>
1	You have a social/communication impairment such as Asperger's syndrome/other autistic spectrum disorder	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	You are blind or have a serious visual impairment uncorrected by glasses	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	You are deaf or have a serious hearing impairment uncorrected by hearing aids	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	You have a long standing illness or health condition such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease, or epilepsy	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	You have a current mental health condition, such as depression, schizophrenia or anxiety disorder	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	You have a specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, dyspraxia or AD(H)D	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	You have physical impairment or mobility issues, such as difficulty using your arms or using a wheelchair or crutches	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	You have a disability, impairment or medical condition that is not listed above	<input type="checkbox"/>
YES	I agree to an exchange of relevant information about my disability and/or support requirements, including my DSA report if appropriate, being disclosed to those staff who have a need to know, and to relevant external providers of support (e.g. suppliers of enablers/support workers providers i.e. note takers, mentors, study skills tutors), funding bodies, specific support providers, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>
NO	I do not agree to an exchange of relevant information about my disability, but I understand that If I do not agree to disclosure about my disability this may limit the support I receive.	<input type="checkbox"/>

In the event that I do not take up a place I understand that this information will be destroyed within a reasonable period.

***Please complete and return with your application form in order that any support you may need can be put in place***