
Position Statement – Equality & Diversity Issues

Introduction

The College serves a diverse and multi-cultural community, and enrolls students from a huge range of backgrounds. Equality and Diversity continues to be a high priority, with the College's response to the Black Lives Matter movement a new and emerging dimension of our work.

Responsibility for Equality and Diversity strategy relating to the curriculum lies with the Director of Curriculum, supported by the Head of Quality. This includes reviewing teaching, learning, curriculum content, access to the curriculum, the learner experience and student outcomes to ensure equality and diversity issues are identified and addressed.

Responsibility for Equality & Diversity strategy relating to staffing and employment issues, including formal reporting on the Gender Pay Gap, lies with the Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development.

Overall responsibility for Equality & Diversity, including the statutory responsibilities of the College, lies with the Principal & Chief Executive, supported by the Clerk of Governors.

Students

In 2019/20 the college had close to 2500 students aged 16-18 and 5,200 adults on funded programmes.

- The student body had an even gender balance overall: female students made up 48% of enrolments and male students 52%.
- Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students accounted for 36% of the college cohort and 34% of the 16-18 cohort compared to 16% of the total population in Bristol (2011 census data).
- Just over 2,000 students on funded courses – 26% of the total - considered themselves to have a learning difficulty or disability, which compares to 8% of the Bristol population (2011 census data).
- There were 451 students identified as having high needs which is 6% of the total cohort.
- There were 188 care leavers at the college, a significant decrease from 2018/19 (226).
- The proportion of 16-18 year olds on Free School Meals has gone up from 15% in 2017/18 to 22% in 2019/20 – 551 in total.

Staff

- Out of the total of 895 employees (600 full time equivalent), the proportion of female staff is 65% and male staff is 35%, with 48% of managers being women.
- The percentage of staff identifying as Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) is 6.8%, with 2.4% identifying as of Mixed Ethnicity, and 72% as White, while 18.5% prefer not to say.
- The percentage of staff identifying themselves as having a disability is 5.3%
- The percentage of staff identifying themselves as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender or Queer (LGBTQ) is 3.5%, with 50.5% identifying as heterosexual and 46% preferring not to say.
- Based on March 2019 data the College's overall gender pay gap is just over 16%, below the educational sector average of 25% and the national average of 17%.

Current Strengths and Areas for Improvement

Strengths

- The College has successfully widened participation in most areas of the curriculum and is highly inclusive, with a high proportion of students of Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) background, students from low-income households and those with High Needs.
- Students feel the College is welcoming and is a place where people who have different beliefs, cultures and learning experiences can work together in a tolerant and respectful environment.
- The College meets the needs of those who are most disadvantaged very well and provides them with clear pathways to improved employment, greater independence or higher levels of education.
- Student outcomes are broadly similar for all learners, with few equality gaps.

Areas for Improvement

- Apprenticeship provision is less inclusive than other areas of the College, with Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) apprentices making up only 12% of the total and female apprentices only 26% of the total.
- Although achievement for the great majority of students is generally similar across gender, ethnicity and disability, there were gaps in achievement in 2019/20 for High Needs students, 16-18 Care Leavers, 16-18 Caribbean male students, 16-18 Bangladeshi male students, and 19+ Caribbean female students.
- The proportion of staff of Black and Minority Ethnic background and those who are disabled, does not adequately reflect the profile of the community the colleges serves.

Summary of Quality Improvement Plan

- The Assistant Director of Apprenticeships and Skills will review potential reasons for the under-representation of BAME and female apprentices and consult with Heads of relevant departments to draw up an action plan to address the issues.
- The Head of Quality is conducting further analysis to identify the possible causes for equality gaps and potential actions to close them.
- The Assistant Director of Additional Learning Support & Special Educational Needs will be considering the recent recommendations from an external consultant on developing and improving our High Needs provision, particularly for those students who are not on specialist SEN courses.
- The Director of HR and Organisational Development will implement an Equality & Diversity strategy designed to address any identified equality pay gaps and to bring the profile of our staff more into line with the catchment area of the College.

Summary of Progress

- The first draft of the Equality & Diversity report on curriculum issues has been discussed at the meeting of the Governors' Curriculum & Quality Sub-committee in November and key areas for improvement have been agreed.
- Progress towards developing an HR Equality & Diversity Strategy was reported to the November meeting of the Governors' Business Services Sub-committee and a draft strategy is due to be circulated in December.
- A Black Lives Matter steering group has been established, chaired by the Principal, to consider any additional actions that may complement or extend the College's Equality & Diversity strategy.