

GIRTON COLLEGE

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND WORKFORCE DIVERSITY POLICY

1. Equal Opportunities

- 1.1 The College is committed to a policy of equal opportunity. No member of staff, visitor or student will be treated less favourably than any other on grounds of gender, religion, religious or other philosophical belief, marital status, sexual orientation, race, colour, disability or age. This policy concentrates on equal opportunities issues for workers, and those who are seeking to work within the College, whether they work on a permanent, casual, fixed term or temporary basis and regardless of whether such work is full time or part-time.
- 1.2 Any individual who feels that they have been treated less favourably due to their gender, religion, religious or other philosophical belief, marital status, sexual orientation, race, colour, disability or age should speak in confidence either to the College Officer in charge of their Department or to one of College's Harassment Officers or to the Personnel Officer. Treatment of anyone less favourably on one of these grounds will be regarded as a serious disciplinary matter.
- 1.3 Harassment on the grounds of gender, religion, religious or other philosophical belief, marital status, sexual orientation, race, colour or disability is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Harassment is defined as:
unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment. College policy is to take all reported incidents seriously and to investigate them. In accordance with the College's Harassment Policy.

2. Diversity

- 2.1 Diversity involves recognising, valuing and taking account of people's different backgrounds, knowledge, skills and experiences, and encouraging and using those differences to create an effective workforce.
- 2.2 In addition to the legal, moral and social benefits, increased diversity amongst the workforce of the College may enhance the College's standing as an employer of choice, as well as maintaining a well-balanced workforce with all people valued

and respected. This may lead to possible improvements in the attraction and retention of staff thereby reducing recruitment costs.

3. Monitoring

- 3.1 The College is able to assess the effectiveness of its equal opportunities policy by gathering information. The Personnel Officer is responsible for collecting and analysing data obtained from applicants for recruitment and from the existing workforce. This will be assessed in order to establish the College's success in its aims to promote equal opportunities and diversity and to ensure that it can accurately describe itself as an equal opportunities employer.
- 3.2 Any areas of concern arising from the monitoring information, and suggestions for remedying any failures, will be submitted to the Personnel Committee. The Personnel Officer will evaluate and report upon the success of such remedial actions.
- 3.3 It is important that such information is made available throughout the College and all workers are encouraged to contribute ideas about the changes necessary to achieve full equality of opportunity. Information will be provided in a statistical form only and will not reveal individual identities in order to comply with Data Protection requirements and also to encourage individuals to provide sensitive personal data.
- 3.4 The Personnel Officer will monitor levels of turnover, sickness absence and grievances in order to identify any trends occurring which may be linked to issues of equal opportunities. Exit interviews will also be used as a means of gathering information.
- 3.5 All recruitment (including that of casual workers) should normally take place in association with the Personnel Officer so that monitoring of equal opportunities can occur with a view to identifying any groups which are:-
 - not applying for promotion, or fewer applying than may expected;
 - not being recruited, promoted or selected for training or are selected in a significantly lower proportion than their application rate would lead the College to expect;
 - being concentrated in certain jobs, sections or departments.
- 3.6 In the event that an employment agency is used to fill a temporary vacancy or to recruit to a permanent post, it should be made clear to the agency that the post is open to anyone who meets the specified criteria and details requested of the

agency's equal opportunities policy. Such a policy should be checked to ensure that it is comprehensive.

4. Advertising of Vacancies

- 4.1 The Personnel Officer will monitor recruitment media used and the resulting levels of response, not only to ensure the cost-effectiveness of recruitment advertising, but also from a diversity perspective. As a general rule, to enable vacant posts to be made available to as wide a pool of appropriate applicants as possible, posts will be advertised externally. It is, however, recognised that there will be occasions when it is appropriate to advertise on an internal basis only eg internal re-structuring or staff career development. In such circumstances the Personnel Officer must be contacted prior to any offer or approach being made to an individual in order to ensure that any action is justifiable and a report will be made to the Personnel Committee in order to document reasons for the decision. Any concerns about justifying such action should be brought to the Committee's attention in order for a decision to be taken upon whether or not the appointment should proceed in accordance with the Head of Department's wishes. There may also be occasions where it would be justifiable to offer an appointment without the need for competitive interviews eg where there is a suitable alternative vacancy for a worker whose disability makes him/her unable to his/her current job.
- 4.2 As a minimum, external advertising should be regarded as a vacancy being placed with a local job centre and on the College website. The Personnel Officer will seek to develop links with local minority groups (eg Cambridge Community Ethnic Forum) with a view to advertising posts through their newsletters etc at no or minimal cost to the College and also with the local Disability Employment Adviser with regard to making disabled individuals aware of possible appropriate employment opportunities. Opportunities will be made available for the vacancy information or the application process to be undertaken in forms other than written, for any applicants with special needs.
- 4.3 Where vacancies are placed on the website, a hard copy of the advertisement will also be placed on appropriate staff noticeboards to enable those without access to a computer to be made aware of job opportunities. This will also enable Casual Workers to have increased opportunity for being made aware of vacancies, particularly those which are advertised on an internal only basis.
- 4.4 Those on fixed term contracts or staff who are on long term absence due, for example, to maternity leave or sick leave, must

be advised of vacancies. This will usually be undertaken by the Personnel Officer but, in the event that a vacancy occurs within that person's own department, it will usually be the responsibility of the Head of Department to up-date his/her member of staff on such developments.

- 4.5 When posts become vacant, particularly those on higher grades, consideration should be given as to whether they are open to job share or part-time employment as such arrangements may encourage more women to apply.

5. Training and Development

- 5.1 Training opportunities should be made available to all employees regardless of their gender, religion, religious or philosophical belief, marital status, sexual orientation, race, colour, disability or age.
- 5.2 Some employees may put up their own barriers to effective training and development eg older workers may lack confidence or feel they are too old; younger workers may not think they need training. Employees who have successfully completed training should be used as role models to encourage those who are less willing. Also different means of learning should be used for different individuals wherever possible in order to take account of individual needs and preferences.

6. Adapting Working Practices

- 6.1 The College has a number of policies aimed at increasing diversity and encouraging equal opportunities. Such policies include those relating to: Adoption Leave, Maternity Leave, Parental Leave, and Paternity Leave plus a policy and procedure for making requests for Flexible Working (including requests to reduce contracted hours of work). Short-term leave is also available for dealing with Family Emergencies. Details of these are included within the Personnel Manual and the procedures set out within the policies must be followed on all occasions in order to ensure consistency of application throughout the College. The Personnel Officer will monitor the application of such policies and the outcome of requests so that consistency can be ensured and also to maintain records which may be beneficial as evidence of the College's approach to equal opportunities issues if these were challenged.
- 6.2 In the event that a request is made for a Job Share arrangement, the options should be explored including, if necessary, the possibility of recruiting a job share partner for the person making the request. The Head of Department, in conjunction with the Personnel Officer, will explore the feasibility

of any such request and in providing a written response to the request. In the event that the request is not agreed, written reasons must be provided. In the event that agreement is reached, then the Personnel Officer will set out the contractual arrangements of the job share before it commences.

6.3 In terms of staff catering arrangements, Halal and Kosher food are available, by prior arrangement, at College and Wolfson Court Kitchens. Refreshments for College functions include vegetarian options for food and non-alcoholic options for drinks. However, further provision may need to be considered with regard to religion and religious belief in terms of working practices in the event that a request is made, for example, with regard to:-

- time off to observe religious festivals/ceremonies;
- breaks at alternative times for prayers;
- provision of prayer rooms with appropriate hygiene facilities;
- dress.

Serious and thorough consideration must be given to all such requests and the Personnel Officer should be involved in discussions between the Head of Department and the worker concerned. As much flexibility as possible must be offered and the outcome of the request must be confirmed in writing, together with any reasons why it is not possible to offer the requested flexibility. The person concerned will have a right of appeal against this decision.

7. Breaches of policy

Breaches of this policy are a disciplinary offence and will be dealt with through the College's Disciplinary Procedure. Grievances regarding the policy will be dealt with in accordance with the College's Grievance policy.

8. Review

This policy will be reviewed on a 12 monthly basis by the Personnel Committee. Regular monitoring reports to evaluate its effectiveness will be made on the basis of at least one per year.

Personnel Officer
November 2004