

DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME – GOLDSMITHS, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Note: This policy should be read in conjunction with the general College Code of Practice relating to Equal Opportunities for staff and students and the Race Equality Policy.

Commitment of the College

Goldsmiths, University of London values its diverse community. In order to maintain that diversity, Goldsmiths aims to ensure that all policies, procedures and practices do not disadvantage or exclude on grounds of disability.

The legal definition of disability is outlined in Appendix B, however, Goldsmiths is committed to viewing 'disability' from the 'social model' perspective and aims to implement the scheme using a rights-based approach to equality for the disabled.

Our aim is to understand and dismantle the barriers, which exclude and limit the life chances of disabled people and Goldsmiths is therefore committed to ensuring the appropriate reasonable adjustments are made to allow equality of access to all Goldsmiths activities. Goldsmiths expects all its staff, students, suppliers, contractors and visitors to endorse this commitment and to behave accordingly.

There are channels of complaint (via Goldsmiths Code to Combat Harassment and Bullying in the working and learning environment, and the grievance/complaints procedure) for anyone who believes they have been the subject of discrimination or harassment. Disciplinary procedures may be invoked against any member of staff/student whose behaviour contravenes this scheme.

Background

National and regional context

The Department for Work and Pensions estimates that 10 million adults within Britain are disabled. This equates to 22% of the population of Great Britain. The Greater London Assembly (GLA) estimates that 20% of Londoners have a disability. The Lewisham Disability Equality Strategy states that 15.6% of the population as suffers from a long term illness or has a disability. The borough estimates that 13% of their residents and 10.1% of Council staff are disabled.

Goldsmiths context

As at June 2006, Goldsmiths had 771 students with a declared disability. In terms of staff, 1.2% have declared a disability. Current data from the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE) states that 2.3% of all staff employed in the English HEI sector have declared themselves to be disabled. Goldsmiths has set itself a target to recruit 4% of staff with a declared disability by 2009; statistics will be annually monitored. Preparation and implementation of this Scheme is another step in informing staff and students of the definition of disability, the support that is available and encouraging them so that they can declare a disability without fear of prejudice.

Monitoring and assessing the Scheme's effectiveness and addressing inequalities revealed

Goldsmiths is committed to assessing the impact of all its functions and policies on disability equality. The College will monitor the admission, progression and retention of its disabled students and the recruitment and career progression of its disabled staff.

Goldsmiths will use information arising from the monitoring process to address any patterns of discrimination and inequality, extend good practice, and take positive action for under-represented groups as permitted by legislation.

Roles and responsibilities

Council is responsible for ensuring that Goldsmiths complies with the Disability Discrimination Act and that it meets its duties. The Equality and Diversity Committee is responsible for reviewing, developing and monitoring this policy. The Equality and Diversity Committee reports its findings and proposals to Academic Board and Council at least once a year and Council has the ultimate responsibility for the successful implementation of this scheme.

The Registrar and Secretary carries a particular responsibility for ensuring that this Scheme is effective. However all members of the College, particularly the Senior Management Team, Director of Human Resources, Academic Registrar, Head of Student Support Services, and heads of academic and support departments, in their own areas of responsibilities and/or in the light of their managerial roles, have a duty to ensure the policy is effective. All members of the Goldsmiths community have a responsibility to ensure that this Scheme is adhered to.

Engagement with disabled people

Goldsmiths is committed to working with disabled staff and students who are key stakeholders of this Scheme. Communication and involvement has focused on identifying what is working well and what is not working well and what needs to be changed. Methods used have included surveys, focus groups and the working party; responses have been analysed and used to identify specific priorities within the action plan in Appendix A. A summary of responses from surveys and focus groups is contained in Appendix C. Goldsmiths undertakes to maintain this involvement in reviewing and in proposing any future changes to this Scheme.

Failure to follow policy

In cases of infringement of Goldsmiths policies, procedures or practices, a report is made to the Secretary of the Equality and Diversity Committee; the issue may then be referred to the Equality and Diversity Committee and/or Council who will address the matter accordingly. If an individual experiences harassment, then the Code to Combat Bullying and Harassment should be invoked through line managers or their Head of Department.

Publication

The results of the monitoring undertaken under this Scheme will be published annually within the Equality report on Goldsmiths' web site. This policy will be publicised in appropriate ways within Goldsmiths. Other formats such as large print will also be available.

Details on consultation exercises undertaken in relation to disability issues will be published alongside the results on the monitoring exercises.

Goldsmiths, University of London

Policy statements in relation to the main areas

Values

Goldsmiths is committed to equality of opportunity for staff and students and this is enshrined in its Charter (*para 13*). The College's strategic plan reiterates this commitment as one of the core strategic aims.

To foster an environment committed to and supportive of diversity, the free exchange of ideas, tolerance and equal opportunities, and to work to raise aspirations and widen access to education in general and Goldsmiths in particular.

(Strategic Aim Five)

Goldsmiths is committed to an inclusive culture, whereby all individuals are encouraged to participate fully, to achieve their potential, are entitled to respect and dignity and are treated solely on the basis of their abilities, in an environment that is free from prejudice and unlawful discrimination.

Management and Governance

Goldsmiths is committed to a system of management and governance that is fair, inclusive and proactive in undertaking its responsibilities to actively promote equality of opportunity and good practice in relation to disability issues.

Training and Development

Goldsmiths will provide ongoing development opportunities to ensure that in relation to disability everyone is aware of its policies, procedures and practices. Goldsmiths remains committed to developing an awareness of appropriate adjustments to allow for equality of access, not only to the physical environment, but also to all areas of College life.

Admissions, access and participation

Goldsmiths adheres to an admissions policy that is as inclusive as possible and which widens participation for under-represented groups. *This commitment is articulated within the Equality and Diversity Strategic Aim as identified above.*

Goldsmiths will monitor all stages of the student admission processes from application to outcomes and all students' achievements and progress.

Curriculum, teaching and learning, assessment

Goldsmiths aims to ensure that its curriculum, learning, teaching and assessment methods are informed by good practice and are as far as reasonably possible, accessible to all students. Goldsmiths is also committed to making reasonable adjustments to ensure that any further specific needs are addressed. We wish to embed a culture where the learning needs of disabled students are taken into account at all stages of the planning and delivery of the curriculum.

Student support and guidance

Goldsmiths recognises that studying at university can be a challenge especially for disabled students. A variety of support is available in order to enhance the student experience and enable students to reach their full personal, academic and career potential.

Goldsmiths will continue to develop its student support provision in order to provide the best possible experience and resource to students throughout their time at Goldsmiths. The Disability Team are available to offer practical support and advice to disabled students by working with students from a pre- entry stage right through to graduation. The team also offers policy advice to the College on disability related issues to ensure College-wide compliance with all relevant legislation.

Student and staff feedback

Goldsmiths remains committed to receiving students' and staff feedback on their experience here and will continue to solicit their view via the programme monitoring process, surveys and the regular student census as appropriate. The College will specifically seek feedback from disabled staff and students.

Staff recruitment, promotion, training and career development

Goldsmiths is committed to a diverse workforce and will pursue the standards set out in the main equal opportunities policy in relation to recruitment, promotion, training and career development of staff. The College will continue to monitor all these activities by department and will regularly assess the monitoring information obtained to evaluate the progress Goldsmiths is making towards meeting its disability equality targets and aims. Policies and practices are in place in regard to the recruitment and employment of disabled staff.

Research

Goldsmiths will ensure that its research strategy is consistent with this policy and will actively encourage the undertaking of research in disability issues. The College RAE 2008 Code of Practice explicitly refers to Disability Discrimination legislation and requires all those involved in preparing the RAE 2008 submission to give special consideration to staff members with both permanent disabilities and any temporary disability (with a duration of 12 months or more) when considering the number of research outputs required to be submitted to the exercise. A programme of briefing and training sessions has been organised to ensure that all staff are aware of these and other equality and diversity issues.

Behaviour and discipline

Goldsmiths will review its complaints procedures and disciplinary procedures relating to staff and students to ensure that they are appropriate and effective.

Partnerships and community links

The College's strategic plan commits it to

To develop effective interactions between the College's research and teaching activities and business, especially the creative and cultural industries and the public sector, and to contribute to the economic, social and cultural well-being of local communities.

and in undertaking these activities will promote actively the values in this scheme.

Service delivery (contracting out)

Goldsmiths will review the area of the contracting out of goods and services with the aim of ensuring its policies and activities in this area do not disadvantage any particular group. It will consider sanctions against contractors or providers of service who do not follow the College's Disability Equality Scheme.

Monitoring of the Scheme

Progress in implementing the scheme will be reviewed annually by the Equality and Diversity Committee who will report their findings to Academic Board and Council. The College is committed to involving disabled staff and students in this process.

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