

# Equality & Diversity Policy 2023-26

LCCA Governance

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## 1. Introduction, definition, and context

This Policy outlines how LCCA promotes equality, values diversity, and fosters a culture that recognises the contribution of people from varied backgrounds and experiences.

Equality means removing barriers, preventing discrimination, and ensuring fair access and opportunity for all, as required by law.

Diversity refers to recognising and valuing individual differences – both visible and non-visible – so everyone feels respected and able to contribute.

Equality and diversity are distinct but interdependent; equal opportunity is only possible when individual differences are recognised and valued.

This policy applies to:

- all College staff, including agency workers, and to all job applicants.
- all enrolled students and prospective applicants.

Staff and students working in or on the premises of other organisations must adhere to the policies and procedures of that organisation.

The policy also applies to the college visitors, including visiting students, visiting lecturers, guest speakers and third-party contractors.

## 2. Purpose

This policy explains how the College meets its equality duties under the Equality Act 2010 for staff and students. It applies to all aspects of employment and study, including recruitment, selection, teaching, and assessment.

The College is committed to a supportive workplace for staff and a high-quality learning environment where all individuals are valued and students can thrive.

In line with the Equality Act 2010, the College must:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity
- foster good relations across its community

These duties apply to all protected characteristics, including age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy and parenthood, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

### **3. Disability Discrimination Act (2005)**

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and Equality Act 2010 make it unlawful to discriminate against disabled people in employment or services. The College is committed to preventing direct, indirect, associative and perceived disability discrimination and harassment.

Under the Equality Act 2010, the College must: eliminate discrimination and harassment; promote equality of opportunity and positive attitudes; involve disabled people in decision-making; remove barriers, including through more favourable treatment where required; and review policies and practices for potential discrimination.

### **4. Definition of Disability**

Disability is defined broadly as a physical or mental impairment with a substantial, long-term effect on normal daily activities. Conditions include sensory impairments, specific learning difficulties, long-term medical or mental health conditions, and unseen disabilities. Cancer, HIV and MS are covered from diagnosis. Protection also applies to people associated with a disabled person.

### **5. Students with Disabilities**

The College supports access for disabled students, encourages applications, and works to ensure no applicant or enrolled student is disadvantaged because of an impairment.

### **6. Admissions and support identification**

All applicants are assessed on academic merit. Where a disability is declared, support needs are identified early without delaying admission. The College assesses reasonable adjustments, ensures applicants are not disadvantaged, and informs candidates if specific needs cannot be met. Adjustments may include accessible timetabling, additional support, or modifications for placements and fieldwork.

### **7. Premises and access**

The College recognises access challenges within its buildings and undertakes annual audits to inform improvements. New builds and major refurbishments are designed to meet diverse accessibility needs.

### **8. Student support**

The College uses structured assessments to identify support needs, including those arising during study. Students are encouraged to discuss required adjustments, and guidance is provided to relevant staff.

## **9. Assessment**

Assessment adjustments may include extra time, use of technology, alternative formats, or separate rooms. Processes ensure no student is disadvantaged, supported by anonymous marking and appeal routes. Students with disabilities are referred for needs assessments, and the College provides or advises on funding and support. Mobility access guidance and specific adjustments are communicated early.

## **10. Staff with disabilities**

The College aims to recruit, support and retain disabled staff. Recruitment processes are monitored to ensure fairness, and HR coordinates required adjustments with relevant departments.

## **11. Reasonable adjustments**

The College provides reasonable adjustments – such as changes to duties, work location, hours, equipment, accessible materials, interpreters, or adapted health and safety arrangements – to ensure disabled staff are not disadvantaged.

## **12. Disciplinary and Redundancy Safeguards**

Disciplinary or redundancy decisions must consider whether disability-related factors are involved, ensuring disabled staff are not unfairly disadvantaged. Consultation is undertaken in all cases.

## **13. Racial Equality**

LCCA is a diverse institution committed to promoting race equality, eliminating discrimination, and fostering good relations between racial groups. The College values the diversity of its staff and students and works to maintain high equality standards.

## **14. Harassment and Bullying**

The College is committed to ensuring that everyone is treated with dignity and respect while working or studying. No form of harassment – whether or not explicitly prohibited by law – will be tolerated. Individuals must not engage in behaviour that they know, or should reasonably know, amounts to harassment.

Harassment is behaviour that undermines a person's dignity or well-being. It may be persistent or a single incident. Unwanted conduct constitutes harassment when it violates someone's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment, including conduct related to gender, disability, sexuality, race, or ethnic or national origin.

Bullying involves intimidating, coercive or harmful behaviour, whether or not it breaches formal rules. Such behaviour damages individuals and the wider working or learning environment. Intimidation, victimisation or retaliation against anyone who raises or supports a complaint is unacceptable and may result in disciplinary, civil or criminal action.

## **15. Gender Recognition**

The College is committed to promoting gender equality, eliminating discrimination and fostering good relations between people of all genders. It values the diversity of its staff and students and works to maintain high equality and inclusion standards.

This policy covers the rights and responsibilities of staff and students who have transitioned or are transitioning, in line with the Gender Recognition Act 2004.

All staff involved in the College's functions must understand and apply gender-equality principles across areas such as admissions, course access, assessment, student support, curriculum delivery, staff recruitment and development, and procurement.

## **16. Sexual Orientation Equality**

The College is committed to promoting gender equality, eliminating discrimination and fostering good relations between people of all genders. It values the diversity of its staff and students and works to maintain high equality and inclusion standards.

This policy covers the rights and responsibilities of staff and students who have transitioned or are transitioning, in line with the Gender Recognition Act 2004.

All staff involved in the College's functions must understand and apply gender-equality principles across areas such as admissions, course access, assessment, student support, curriculum delivery, staff recruitment and development, and procurement.

## **17. Religion and Beliefs**

The College is committed to an inclusive environment where staff and students are treated with dignity and respect, and where no one is disadvantaged because of their religion or belief.

The Equality Act 2010 protects individuals from discrimination, harassment and victimisation based on religion or belief, including lack of religion. Religion refers to any religious affiliation, and belief includes religious or philosophical beliefs as well as non-religious worldviews.

The term 'religion or belief' covers the full range of faiths and non-religious positions found in the UK, including atheism, agnosticism and humanism.

## 18. Age

Age is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. The College does not tolerate age discrimination against employees, job applicants, trainees or students, and expects decisions to be based on clear, objective criteria with awareness of unconscious bias.

### Age discrimination includes:

- **Direct discrimination** – less favourable treatment because of actual, perceived or associated age. Only direct discrimination based on actual age can be justified, and only where it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- **Indirect discrimination** – a policy or practice that disadvantages a particular age group unless objectively justified as proportionate.
- **Harassment** – unwanted age-related conduct that violates dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.
- **Victimisation** – unfair treatment for making or supporting an age-related complaint.

These principles apply across admissions, access to courses, assessment, employment and all related procedures, communications and materials, including student support, curriculum delivery, and staff recruitment, development, promotion, grievance, disciplinary and exit processes. (Minimum age requirements may apply to particular courses.)

## 19. Training and Development

All students and staff receive the Student Handbook and relevant induction information. The College provides workshops and training sessions to promote equality, diversity and inclusion, ensuring all community members are aware of their responsibilities and rights regardless of protected characteristic.

## 20. Disclosure and Confidentiality

The College respects the privacy of students and staff. Information about support needs is shared only on a 'need-to-know' basis with those directly involved in providing support. Requests for a higher level of confidentiality will be respected. All staff and students should consult the College's GDPR policy for further information.

## 21. Non-compliance and Complaints

Students may raise concerns about non-compliance with this policy through the Student Complaints Procedure. Staff should report concerns through their line manager or follow the Grievance Procedure outlined in the Staff Handbook.

## **22. Responsibility for this policy and Equality and Diversity Provision**

Quality holds overall responsibility for reviewing this policy and supporting Student Services and HR in overseeing Equality and Diversity provision, with the Academic Board delegating specific duties where appropriate.

Deans, departments and line managers must ensure staff and students are aware of and apply this policy, promote equality and diversity within their areas, identify relevant development needs, and support staff to work effectively.

Teaching, support and welfare staff must respond to diverse student needs, promote equality through their programmes and interactions, and ensure curricula and materials are accessible and free from discriminatory content, except where such materials are used for critical study.

All staff are expected to apply equality and diversity principles in daily work, respond positively to differing needs, and keep their understanding of this policy up to date. Concerns about discrimination, harassment or bullying should be raised with a line manager or HR.

Students must treat others with dignity and respect (including online), challenge or report discrimination, harassment or bullying, and respond inclusively to individual differences. Concerns should be raised following the Student Handbook guidance or with the Head of Quality or their Dean/Course Director.

Key Information	
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