

Equal Opportunities Procedure (Students)

[QP2.17]

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1. Introduction

It is the policy of The Adam Smith College that there is equal opportunity to learning and that all students will be recruited on the basis of their ability, their suitability, and the requirements of the course. No applicant shall receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of:

- Race
- Sex
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Marital or civil partnership status
- Age
- Disability
- Political beliefs
- Religious or other similar beliefs
- Creed or
- Social persuasion

Furthermore, the College is committed to promoting equality in relation to all its student policies and practices.

2. Responsibility

It is the responsibility of all staff in carrying out their normal duties to ensure compliance with the terms of the policy and to adopt a positive attitude towards equality of opportunity.

Directors and Managers shall be responsible for:-

- (a) Communication of the policy to all staff and ensuring their compliance.
- (b) Identification of training needs of staff involved in recruitment and selection of students.
- (c) Investigation of specific complaints of discrimination or discriminatory practice.

2.1 Complaints of discrimination from students shall be considered in accordance with the Complaints Procedure or Anti-Harassment and Bullying Procedure. If the incident is perceived to be racist, this must be dealt with in accordance with the Anti-Harassment and Bullying Procedure.

- 2.2 Students also have a responsibility to comply with the Equal Opportunity policy and treat fellow students and staff with respect. Failure of any student to abide by the terms of the Policy will be treated as a serious matter warranting disciplinary action in accordance with the appropriate procedures.

3. Recruitment Procedures

- 3.1 The selection of students for recruitment shall be based on objective criteria related to the course requirements. The criteria used in selection shall be only those that are necessary and justifiable for the effective performance of the course and they shall be applied consistently to all applicants, i.e. the competence standards. Applicants shall not be rejected on the basis of criteria which are merely convenient as opposed to being essential for the course, as this may constitute indirect discrimination. Indirect discrimination occurs when selection criteria are used which are not strictly essential and which in practice exclude a greater proportion of one group than any other.

- 3.2 Those responsible for selection must guard against assumptions based upon an individual's:

- Race – including ethnic origin, colour, nationality and national origin
- Gender
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage or Civil Partnership
- Sexual orientation
- Age
- Disability
- Religion and belief
- Political beliefs
- Social background
- Trade union membership
- Responsibility for dependents

Examples of such assumptions would be that a given individual would:

- (a) have outside commitments that would interfere with study, OR
- (b) not be able to cope with physically strenuous tasks, OR
- (c) produce an unfavourable reaction from the public or other students, OR
- (d) have an unacceptably high incidence of sickness, OR
- (e) Possess limited career ambitions, OR
- (f) Lack commitment to the course.

Questions asked at interview should relate to the requirements of the post and the information contained in the individual application and a similar range of questions should be put to all applicants.

- 3.3** College course recruitment shall be advertised in external media and through college literature and publications. Applicants shall be given sufficiently clear and accurate information through advertisements, course descriptions and information sessions, or interviews, to enable them to assess their own suitability for a place. Where necessary, the college will provide information on request in alternative formats. Recruitment literature shall not imply there is a preference for one group of applicants unless there is an occupational requirement, which limits a course to a particular sex, in which case this must be clearly stated. The existence of any occupational requirement shall be reviewed annually.

The College will also consider positive action initiatives where there is a clear under-representation of one group within the student complement, for example, male students in traditionally female subjects and vice versa.

- 3.4** The College will aim to ensure that where it is involved in any activities related to recruitment of students, for example, careers fairs or Open Days, that these are accessible and inclusive for the range of students who may wish to take part.

- 3.5** In the event of a complaint of discrimination, the Curriculum Head or other person responsible for the selection decision will be expected to state the criteria on which the decision was based and to demonstrate that the person recruited was a student who best met those criteria. Records should be kept of selection interviews indicating not only the reasons for selection of the successful candidate, but also of the reasons for non-selection.

Where there is doubt about the suitability of a student for a course due to a disability, further advice should be sought from the Team Leader Learning Support or one of the Learning Support Co-ordinators. If there are personal care needs, additional support may be available with help from Social Work Service or Health Board as this is not the College's area of responsibility.

4. Learning and Teaching

Staff have to acknowledge and recognise the diversity of the student body and ensure that in their practice they do not discriminate against individuals on the grounds of ethnicity, gender, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, age, disability, political beliefs, religious beliefs or sexual orientation. Teaching materials should avoid stereotyping.

4.1 Additional Support Needs

Reasonable adjustment must be made by the college staff to ensure that access to learning is equitable. Staff must work in partnership with the Learning Support specialists and take a pro-active role with learners who have additional support needs. This may require teaching staff to provide the student with appropriate alterations to the Curriculum, including classroom management, room location and / or layout, modification of teaching materials, exam arrangements or access to technology. Teaching staff must ensure that they have continual communication with the student and the Learning Support specialists to ensure that the student's personal learning support plan (PLSP) is implemented and monitored.

4.2 Religious Beliefs

Where students have religious beliefs which could affect their availability or effectiveness, to sit an exam, alterations to the exam diet should be considered. Staff should ensure that teaching and learning materials reflect a diverse culture.

4.3 Victimisation

Staff should ensure that no individual is victimised by others and if this occurs, support students who wish to follow the advice in the "Anti-Harassment and Bullying Procedures" or Complaint's Procedure to resolve the situation.