



Policy Area 8: Effective Equal Opportunities

- 1. Equal Opportunities and Fair Assessment Policy**
- 2. Disability and Equality Strategy: A Policy Statement for Employees and Students**
- 3. Disability Policy**

Revised August 2016

UK Quality Code focus:

Chapter B3: Learning and teaching

Chapter B4: Enabling student development and achievement

Chapter B6: Assessment of students and the recognition of prior learning

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QAA Context

This Policy Area is concerned with the provision of a learning environment suitable for all students. It notes the need for special provision for some students as a result of disability.

The Policy Area covers aspects of Learning and Teaching relevant to Sections B3 and B4 of the UK Quality Code, and aspects of Assessment covered by B6. .

Chapter B3: Learning and teaching

The Expectation: Higher education providers, working with their staff, students and other stakeholders, articulate and systematically review and enhance the provision of learning opportunities and teaching practices, so that every student is enabled to develop as an independent learner, study their chosen subject(s) in depth and enhance their capacity for analytical, critical and creative thinking.

Chapter B4: Enabling student development and achievement

The Expectation: Higher education providers have in place, monitor and evaluate arrangements and resources which enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential.

Chapter B6: Assessment of students and the recognition of prior learning

The Expectation: Higher education providers operate equitable, valid and reliable processes of assessment, including for the recognition of prior learning, which enable every student to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes for the credit or qualification being sought.

As this Policy Area is focused on a narrowly defined area only a small number of Indications from each Section are relevant.

Some aspects of **Chapter B8: Programme monitoring and review** as this Policy Area is subject on regular review and evaluation, not least in terms of legislative changes affecting provision

1. Equal Opportunities and Fair Assessment Policy

Aim

To ensure that the assessment system and practices do not limit or discriminate against individuals on the grounds of colour, race, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, ethnic or national origin, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, age or disability. [B3: Indicator 2]

The College will act against any possible discriminatory or biased practices and will positively promote access to learning and assessment.

In order to do this the College will in its recruitment of staff and learners ensure:

- that all its marketing materials display positive images of different ethnic minority groups and people with different abilities and disabilities and people of different ages and gender;
- that all advertising does not directly or indirectly discriminate against anyone, except where legal requirements make this necessary;
- that advertising targets all groups and types of people, as much as reasonably possible;
- that all recruitment of staff and students complies with legal requirements and that our practice and decisions are fair and consistent;
- that all staff has access to employment opportunities, training and information regardless of their age, sex, colour, creed, race, religion, sexual orientation or beliefs;
- that all our staff will abide by the equal opportunities requirements of the Joint Awarding Bodies and QCA.

Equal opportunities in the learning provision [B3: Indicator 6]

The College's aim is to provide a framework which promotes equal opportunities for those who have special needs arising from race, gender, religion, disability or learning disability. In adhering to this philosophy, it is intended to make the following provisions through course delivery:

- Learners will be made aware of the precise requirements for every qualification and course at induction. Registration of students does not occur until after induction, therefore Learners will not be penalised if they decide to opt out of the course.
- Learning by any method, including open and distance learning, will be made available.

- All Learners will have the opportunity to undergo a diagnostic test to ascertain the need for additional learning support.
- No upper or lower age limits will be specified, other than that published by the awarding body for assessment and award of a qualification.
- Any Learner with special needs will be strongly encouraged to pursue units of competence in which they have a reasonable chance of attaining the required standard. The College assessment staff will support those who require assistance in obtaining appropriate learning opportunities and assistance.
- Any discriminatory or unfair behaviour displayed by Learners towards other learners or staff will not be tolerated. Such behaviour will result in the Learner being asked to leave the course and, if relevant, their employer being informed.
- Curriculum delivery and learning materials will not discriminate against any person or group.

Special provision for Learners with special needs [B6: Indicator 10]

The College believes that all Learners should be supported in their learning, despite any special needs they may have.

Special needs could include the following:

- Learners with physical impairments e.g.: Wheelchair bound, deaf, blind;
- People at the extremes of the workforce age group;
- People who have not studied for a while;
- Learners with dyslexia and other learning difficulties;
- Learners who lack confidence;
- Learners with special needs and requirements will be supported by their Assessor, Mentor and Internal Verifier or Tutor;
- Learners who cannot/have difficulty with writing can be supported to complete their course through dictation or oral tapes or receive basic skills tutoring and support by referral to a selected basic skills co-coordinator;
- Learners with dyslexia, physical impairments or learning difficulties may be allowed more time to complete their course than the usual time scale according to the regulations of the Awarding Body.

Referrals to specialist help and support organisations will be arranged as appropriate. Learners who require it can be provided with handbooks and centre information on tape.

- We will do their utmost to enable Learners who work part time or nights to obtain their qualification by providing opportunities for assessment through the employment of Assessors who can work flexible hours.
- Where possible, the College offers Learners the opportunity to attend alternative study days to enable greater access to learning, when it may otherwise be difficult i.e. because of working hours or children to consider.
- All Learners will be made aware of, and have access to, the centre appeals procedure.
- Learners can appeal against any practice that they feel is unfair through the centre appeals procedure.

Anti-discriminatory guidance for Assessors and assessment staff

- Where evidence collection includes observation of the Learners working relationships, the Assessor's role is explained clearly and accurately and, where practical, the consent of others is obtained.
- Arrangements for maintaining the confidentiality of evidence are agreed with the Learner and others effected. Work products and photographs can be used as evidence if permission of those affected is obtained in writing.
- Appropriate arrangements are made to maximise access for Learners regardless of their age, race, class, creed, culture, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, political beliefs or any other factors which result in unfair discrimination.
- Cases are reported promptly to the Lead Internal Verifier when the evidence gathering method is found to be discriminatory in any way.
- Learners who disagree with the assessment decision are given accurate and timely advice on how to appeal.
- Information and advice is provided in a manner which respects the dignity of the Learner and the confidentiality of the assessment process.
- The College Management and Lead Internal Verifiers are responsible for ensuring access to fair assessment by providing guidance and support to Assessors to ensure discrimination does not occur either intentionally or inadvertently and make sure that assessment methods do not introduce

requirements that are not included in the national standard.

- All Assessors and Internal Verifiers will be regularly appraised to ensure that anti discriminatory practice is upheld at all times.
- If in doubt of any issue relating to Equal Opportunities the College will seek the appropriate expert advice to ensure practice is fair and meets legal requirements.
- No staff member will discriminate, or treat any other person unfairly, at any time. Any such occurrences will not be tolerated and will be treated very seriously under the disciplinary procedure.
- Should any staff member be witness to, or be aware of, any behaviour or practice which they believe to be unfair or discriminatory must report the concerns immediately.

Monitoring and review of equal opportunities [B3: Indicator 5]

- All staff, students and applicants will be asked to complete an anonymous equal opportunities questionnaire. These will be audited to monitor recruitment practices.
- Learners' completion rates will be audited to identify any shortfalls in our service provision in order to make any necessary improvements.
- The College will actively encourage staff to provide feedback on practice and make recommendations for improvements through regular staff meetings and established communication channels.
- The College will regularly review all policies, marketing material, activities and training materials to ensure they are up to date and compliant with good practice, and legal requirements.
- The College will actively seek feedback from Learners on the training provision and the meeting of special needs through course evaluations, which will be monitored, and audited.

- The College will keep up to date with any changes in best practice and ensure that necessary changes are made to meet these standards
- The College is strictly monitored by the awarding bodies and will, at all times comply with their policies and requirements.
- The College will regularly self-evaluate practice and make any necessary improvements or changes to service delivery.

Review and Evaluation [B8: Indicator 5]

This policy will be reviewed, evaluated and updated annually to constantly improve fair access and assessment practice and equal opportunities for all people affected by it.

2. Disability and Equality Strategy: A Policy Statement for Employees and Students [B3: Indicator 6]

Introduction:

Grafton College is committed to developing a first class working environment for its employees and educational environment for its students. Any kind of disability or long-term illness is considered a serious issue and employees and students with disabilities are treated fairly and equally in the organization. As an equal opportunities employer the College is committed to:

- Promote a constructive organisational atmosphere where all people can work and learn with dignity and in an independent manner;
- Provide continuous support for people with special needs;
- Establish and maintain “Best Practice” on disability issues.

Aims

Disability is seen as a sensitive issue and the College will work to actively remove the many social barriers which hinder the growth of disabled people.

This policy for disabled people has been devised by keeping in view the following aims of the organisation:

- There is no discrimination on the bases of race, religion, colour or disability.
- Equality of opportunity is assured in all areas in Grafton College.
- Individual needs for disabled people are assessed and an appropriate environment and role is offered according to the need and ability.
- The employees with disabilities are treated as active members of the organisation and their involvement in the decision-making is ensured.
- The disability services/programme is integrated in all organisational procedures, is not treated separately.
- All the employees and students with any kind of disability are treated fairly and progress in their career/studies.

The College focuses on “Becoming the Employer of Choice”. This can be done by establishing good practice in the organisation and creating entry channels for people with special requirements from different backgrounds and diverse experiences.

3. Disability Policy

Definition of Disability: For the purposes of the Equality Act, 2010, a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long- term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. [B3: Indicator 7]

Grafton College acknowledges that a person is more likely to be disadvantaged by social and environmental factors than by a disability itself. Disability in this context can include a wide range of issues and conditions. Typically this would be one, or combination of, the following categories:

- Specific learning difficulty - e.g. dyslexia
- Visual impairment - partial sight or blind
- Hearing loss - partial hearing or profoundly deaf
- Mobility difficulties or wheelchair user
- Has restricted use of upper limbs
- Mental health problems
- Condition that is not visible, e.g. epilepsy, sickle cell anaemia, HIV
- Condition not listed above (e.g. back injury)

The above list should not be seen as exhaustive. If an employee or student feels they have a condition that is affecting the ability to study effectively, the College Student Welfare Office and/or Disability Services Team should be contacted. They will provide support on disability and learning difficulties.

Grafton College Context

Grafton College's is committed to a policy of equal opportunities for disabled people and is working towards creating an environment in which all individuals are able to participate fully in the academic and social life of the College. It is recognised that 'disability' covers a wide range of impairments. Different disabilities will have varying impacts on study, work and other aspects of life. Individuals may join Grafton College with a disability or become disabled during their time at Grafton College. Some individuals may be disabled temporarily by accident or illness. [B4: Indicator 3]

Policy Statement [B4: Indicator 1]

Grafton College policy is to comply with the statutory obligations in a positive manner. Grafton College recognises that it has clear obligations to take all reasonable steps to enable people with disabilities to share in the opportunities available to all its students. Grafton College strives to identify barriers and obstacles which exist for disabled people and to work towards their removal. All students will be provided with the opportunity to identify themselves as having a disability on application to a programme of study and annually at registration. Applications for admission from potential students will be assessed primarily on the basis of the applicants' aptitudes, abilities and qualifications.

Students who identify themselves as having a disability will be provided with access to the appropriate advice, support and adaptations to remove barriers and obstacles and enable them to be fully included in the life of Grafton College. All students with a disability will be offered the opportunity to have their study and support needs assessed by the authorised disability assessment centres and appropriate facilities will be provided. Students' views will be taken into account at all times during assessment of their needs.

Grafton College will take all reasonable steps to ensure that programmes and assessments are organised in ways which offer disabled students the best possible opportunities for equal participation and demonstration of learning outcomes. Grafton College will also take reasonable steps to enable students who become disabled during their time at Grafton College to continue in their course of study. As far as is reasonably practicable, and within the constraints of existing buildings; Grafton College will ensure that premises are accessible and at all times safe for disabled students.

Members of staff will have access to appropriate information and advice, and are strongly encouraged to participate in staff development opportunities to develop awareness of disability and equality issue. [B4: Indicator 7]

Confidentiality

Information that you disclosed to staff in the Disability Services Team about your disability will generally only be shared with other staff once there is explicit consent and only to the extent that this is necessary to put support in place and make the reasonable adjustments required.

Only the required adjustments, and not the nature of the disability, be communicated to others; and if there is no requirement for any adjustments and the learner does not wish staff to be made aware of the disability, then there would be no need to communicate to others any information disclosed.

Only in exceptional circumstances (for example, if there is risk to others) would it be necessary to disclose to others within and outside of the College details of the disability without explicit consent. Should a situation like this occur, reasonable steps would be taken to seek permission from the learner where practicable before any information is shared.

Disability data will be used on an anonymised basis for the College's equal opportunities monitoring requirements and will be included in the completion of statistical returns to external bodies such as the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).

Disclosure

Learners will be asked to disclose any disabilities and invited to discuss related needs when applying to Grafton College and registering as a student. This will be handled in a secure and sensitive way.

Listings of applicants and students who have disclosed disabilities are prepared for staff with designated responsibilities for disabled students so they can contact the learner to discuss any specific adjustments required.

Grafton College will take proactive steps to promote the work of the Disability Services Team to all students, however it is the learners responsibility to make contact with the College Disability Adviser (in the Disability Services Team) to discuss support or adjustments.

The Disability Adviser will refer the learner to the relevant Disability Assessment Centres, which will specify the adjustments required and will provide the necessary devices or services within its constraints. The learner will be asked in that context to sign a Disability Disclosure Statement to specify the level of disclosure agreed.

Whilst it is the learners responsibility to decide what the College knows about the disability, for some students who are undertaking programmes of study in professional disciplines, disclosure is a requirement of the accrediting professional body which provides a statutory licence to practise and the College must comply with this requirement. It is therefore important that all such applicants and students respond fully to the disclosure request. If the learner chooses not to disclose your disability during admissions or registration the learner can still disclose subsequently at any stage.

Staff Awareness

Apart from your disclosure, staff may become aware of a learner's disability in other ways such as academic references, during open days, when advice is sought or in casual conversation with staff.

In such circumstances, learners are encouraged to contact designated staff to discuss any support and adjustments might be useful to you. With consent staff can also inform an appropriate member of staff in Disability Services Team and ask them to contact the learner. [B4: Indicator 7]

Student Welfare Office / Disability Services Team

The Student Welfare Officer provides advice and guidance for students with physical difficulties, sensory impairments, chronic (long-term) medical conditions or specific learning difficulties and refers learners to accredited assessment centres.

The disability support service provided by the Student Welfare Office includes, but is not restricted to, special arrangements for assessments, liaison with tutors and needs assessments for students applying for support through the Disabled Students Allowance. Student Finance England and other funding bodies requires that students applying for Disabled Students' Allowance are assessed for their support at an accredited centre.

Facilities and Support [B4: indicator 8]

The College provides an inclusive service for all students. Advice and ongoing support is also provided through a variety of services, including:

- Scheduling classes in rooms that are appropriate for students' needs and providing additional lecture and tutorial hours
- The provision of teaching and learning materials when tutors are aware of needs.

Financial Support

Disabled Students' Allowances

The Disabled Students' Allowance is a non- means tested grant which helps to fund the extra costs a student with a disability, long term medical condition, sensory impairment, physical difficulty, or specific learning difficulty (e.g. dyslexia) may have when attending their course.

To be eligible learners must be on a full-time higher education course.

If learners wish to apply for funding for the Disabled Students' Allowance, the learner must contact your Funding Authority (e.g., Student Finance England)

Further Information

Learners can discuss any concerns about disclosure of your disability with any member of the College Disability Services.

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Chapter B3: Learning and teaching

The Expectation

Higher education providers, working with their staff, students and other stakeholders, articulate and systematically review and enhance the provision of learning opportunities and teaching practices, so that every student is enabled to develop as an independent learner, study their chosen subject(s) in depth and enhance their capacity for analytical, critical and creative thinking.

The Indicators of sound practice

Indicator 1

Higher education providers articulate and implement a strategic approach to learning and teaching and promote a shared understanding of this approach among their staff, students and other stakeholders.

Indicator 2

Learning and teaching activities and associated resources provide every student with an equal and effective opportunity to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Indicator 3

Learning and teaching practices are informed by reflection, evaluation of professional practice, and subject-specific and educational scholarship.

Indicator 4

Higher education providers assure themselves that everyone involved in teaching or supporting student learning is appropriately qualified, supported and developed.

Indicator 5

Higher education providers collect and analyse appropriate information to ensure the continued effectiveness of their strategic approach to, and the enhancement of, learning opportunities and teaching practices.

Indicator 6

Higher education providers maintain physical, virtual and social learning environments that are safe, accessible and reliable for every student, promoting dignity, courtesy and respect in their use.

Indicator 7

Every student is provided with clear and current information that specifies the learning opportunities and support available to them.

Indicator 8

Higher education providers take deliberate steps to assist every student to understand their responsibility to engage with the learning opportunities provided and shape their learning experience.

Indicator 9

Every student is enabled to monitor their progress and further their academic development through the provision of regular opportunities to reflect on feedback and engage in dialogue with staff.

Chapter B4: Enabling student development and achievement

The Expectation

Higher education providers have in place, monitor and evaluate arrangements and resources which enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential.

The Indicators of sound practice

Indicator 1

Through strategic and operational planning, and quality assurance and enhancement, higher education providers determine and evaluate how they enable student development and achievement.

Indicator 2

Higher education providers define, coordinate, monitor and evaluate roles and responsibilities for enabling student development and achievement both internally and in cooperation with other organisations.

Indicator 3

A commitment to equity guides higher education providers in enabling student development and achievement.

Indicator 4

Higher education providers inform students before and during their period of study of opportunities designed to enable their development and achievement.

Indicator 5

To enable student development and achievement, higher education providers put in place policies, practices and systems that facilitate successful transitions and academic progression.

Indicator 6

Higher education providers ensure all students have opportunities to develop skills that enable their academic, personal and professional progression.

Indicator 7

Higher education providers ensure staff who enable students to develop and achieve are appropriately qualified, competent, up to date and supported.

Indicator 8

Higher education providers make available appropriate learning resources and enable students to develop the skills to use them.

Chapter B6: Assessment of students and the recognition of prior learning

The Expectation

Higher education providers operate equitable, valid and reliable processes of assessment, including for the recognition of prior learning, which enable every student to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes for the credit or qualification being sought.

The Indicators of sound practice

Indicator 1

Providers operate effective policies, regulations and processes which ensure that the academic standard for each award of credit or a qualification is rigorously set and maintained at the appropriate level, and that student performance is equitably judged against this standard.

Indicator 2

Assessment policies, regulations and processes, including those for the recognition of prior learning, are explicit, transparent and accessible to all intended audiences.

Indicator 3

Those who might be eligible for the recognition of prior learning are made aware of the opportunities available, and are supported throughout the process of application and assessment for recognition.

Indicator 4

Providers assure themselves that everyone involved in the assessment of student work, including prior learning, and associated assessment processes is competent to undertake their roles and responsibilities.

Indicator 5

Assessment and feedback practices are informed by reflection, consideration of professional practice, and subject-specific and educational scholarship.

Indicator 6

Staff and students engage in dialogue to promote a shared understanding of the basis on which academic judgements are made.

Indicator 7

Students are provided with opportunities to develop an understanding of, and the necessary skills to demonstrate, good academic practice

Indicator 8

The volume, timing and nature of assessment enable students to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes.

Indicator 9

Feedback on assessment is timely, constructive and developmental.

Indicator 10

Through inclusive design wherever possible, and through individual reasonable adjustments wherever required, assessment tasks provide every student with an equal opportunity to demonstrate their achievement.

Indicator 11

Assessment is carried out securely.

Indicator 12

Degree-awarding bodies assure themselves that the standards of their awards are not compromised as a result of conducting assessment in a language other than English.

Indicator 13

Processes for marking assessments and for moderating marks are clearly articulated and consistently operated by those involved in the assessment process.

Indicator 14

Providers operate processes for preventing, identifying, investigating and responding to unacceptable academic practice.

Indicator 15

Degree-awarding bodies specify clearly the membership, procedures, powers and accountability of examination boards and assessment panels, including those dealing with the recognition of prior learning; this information is available to all members of such boards.

Indicator 16

Boards of examiners/assessment panels apply fairly and consistently regulations for progression within, and transfer between, programmes and for the award of credits and qualifications.

Indicator 17

The decisions of examination boards and assessment panels are recorded accurately, and communicated to students promptly and in accordance with stated timescales.

Indicator 18

Degree-awarding bodies systematically evaluate and enhance their assessment policies, regulations and processes.