



**Richmond upon Thames College**

## **Richmond upon Thames College Single Equality Scheme**

This document explains how we plan to meet our statutory duties to promote race, disability and gender equality. It brings together the College's race, disability and gender equality schemes and sets out an equality action plan to address these issues.

## **Foreword**

Richmond upon Thames College exists to help **all** of its students achieve their full potential. As a learning organisation, RuTC strives to ensure that the values which underpin high quality teaching and learning - encouragement, honest self-evaluation, high expectations and mutual respect - characterise, its management and organisational culture.

The primary focus for all staff is to care for students and help them to develop their potential and to provide a safe, welcoming and vibrant setting for learning.

Students, staff and other constituents are encouraged to participate in its running and development through clear communication and regular consultation within an atmosphere of openness, confidence and trust.

## **Our Commitment to Equality**

RUTC is pleased to welcome students and staff from any different backgrounds and abilities.

The College and its staff and students will make every effort to enable inclusion into all aspects of college life for people who may encounter barriers. This includes staff, students and visitors to the College. Each person is seen as an individual and the college wishes to respond to individual needs. We are committed to ensuring that all people are treated fairly irrespective of gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, religion or belief.

Our courses, materials and quality assurance procedures all reflect a commitment to the principles of equality and diversity.

## **The legal context**

The College's Single Equality Scheme (SES) is intended to respond to the spirit as well as the letter of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Equality Act 2006. It also aims to promote all other forms and strands of equality and human rights

that might be relevant to our work. This goes beyond our statutory positive duties to promote race, gender and disability equality and extends to the legislation protecting against discrimination on the grounds of age, sexual orientation and religion or belief. The scheme aims to integrate equality and fair treatment issues into our core priorities and functions. It incorporates existing action plans within our Race Equality Scheme and Disability Equality Scheme. Leadership and commitment at all levels of the organisation are central to the success of the scheme. In everything we do, we will consider how we can ensure that we do not discriminate against or disadvantage individuals or groups, and we will seek opportunities to promote equality and diversity wherever we can. We recognise that the scheme is work in progress, to be consulted on and refined as necessary. The practical steps to be taken are presented as an action plan.

## **Purpose**

This scheme is valid for a period of 3 years when it will be reviewed.

This is the College's first Single Equality Scheme. It sets out our approach to equality and diversity, both for ourselves as an employer of a significant number of staff (563 in July

2008), and as a provider of further and higher education in South West London. It is called a 'single' equality scheme because it explains and responds to our statutory duties to promote equality in three areas of equality – race, disability and gender. The statutory duties are under the following legislation:

- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- Equality Act 2006.

In addition to the legislation referred to above, the following Regulations are also relevant to our SES:

- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006

These latter Regulations do not impose a positive duty to promote equality, but they do apply to employment and to the provision of further and higher education. We must, therefore, ensure through our functions, policies and practices that we do not discriminate on any of these grounds. Our Single Equality Scheme (SES) will help us to achieve a framework for action across all equality strands, particularly for the three that have positive duties associated with them: race, disability and gender. We believe that a combined scheme will make us better able to communicate and manage our equality commitments and action. We also believe that publishing one combined scheme, and one consultation, is an appropriate and proportionate approach to equality which should maximise people's opportunities to be involved in our policy making. This SES demonstrates our commitment to go beyond mere compliance with the legislation, and to move towards mainstreaming equality and diversity by bringing together our work into one place, consulting widely on it and putting in place a comprehensive equality action plan to ensure our commitments are carried out. It also reflects the position taken by the Commission for Equality and Human Rights in drawing together all the equality strands.

Under the specific duties of the RR(A)A, the DDA 2005 and Equality Act, we have statutory duties to report annually on our schemes' progress. We will accomplish this by submitting an annual report to our Governors on the SES, which will cover activity across the race, disability and gender schemes as well as other equality activity. The annual report to our Corporation is available from the Clerk to the Corporation. We will continue to seek the views of others about our SES and about our progress towards the targets set out in our action plan.

### **Impact Assessments**

Our aim is to achieve a practical process to impact assessment, checking for likely impact in terms of race, disability, gender and age. If the evidence supports it further investigation, (involving people who are or are likely to be affected by our policy) will be carried out.

## **Monitoring Arrangements**

We will continue to monitor the make-up of our learners and staff groups in terms of race, disability, gender and age. We will continue to analyse the overall make up of the workforce, recruitment and promotions, training and development, disciplinary and grievance processes, and turnover together with the retention and achievement of learners and the profile of complainants. This data will be reported to the Senior Leadership Team and the Equality Opportunities and Diversity Committee. The staff data will also be reported in to the Employment Committee of the Corporation. Student data will be included in the College's self assessment report which is also reported to the Corporation.

## **The College as an Employer**

We have established employment-related policies and procedures that reflect our commitment to equality and diversity and that will assist us in achieving and retaining a diverse workforce.

## **The College Governance**

This Scheme is subject to the approval of the Corporation who will monitor our performance.

## **The College as a Provider of Education**

We are committed to ensuring that teaching and learning are available to and accessible for a broad range of students. We will achieve this through: diverse marketing and admissions arrangements; the provision of full and part-time courses; the use of a range of teaching methods and media; the delivery of a diverse curriculum; classroom practice that takes full account of the need to engage students of all levels of ability and preferred ways of working and the provision of a broad range of student support services that cater for students with diverse needs.

## **The College as a Partner**

We work in partnership with a broad range of other institutions and agencies to provide our services and to support others in achieving community cohesion. We will work to ensure those partners adopt the same commitment to equality and diversity as the College does. Our concern is to ensure that learners enjoy the same positive experience wherever their place of study or work placement. To this end we will work closely with our partners to share experiences and learn from each other's best practice.

## **The College as a Purchaser**

When buying products or services from another provider, we will seek to be reassured about that organisation's commitment to equality and diversity. This will be a significant factor in selection during any tendering process.

## **The College Facilities**

We are committed to ensuring our buildings and the facilities therein are accessible and create an environment where everyone can live, learn and work without unnecessary barriers.

# **Legislative Context to Our Single Equality Scheme**

## **Race Equality**

The Race Relations Act 1976, as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 – referred to here as the Act – places a general duty on public authorities to promote race equality. Under the new duty, and through all relevant functions, public authorities are required to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- promote equality of opportunity
- promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

We are required to have and maintain a written statement of our policy for promoting race equality. We are required to assess the impact of our policies on staff and students of different racial groups and, in particular, on the attainment levels of students. We are required to monitor the admission and progress of students and the recruitment and career progression of staff. We are required to make arrangements for publishing our race equality statement and to publish annually the results of our monitoring.

The College meets these requirements in its SES.

## Disability Equality

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 - referred to here as the DDA 2005 – places a general duty on public authorities to promote disability equality. Under the new duty, and through all relevant functions, public authorities are required to have due regard to the need to:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the DDA
- eliminate harassment of disabled people that is related to their disabilities
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life
- take steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably than others.

In addition, the DDA 2005 places specific duties on, *inter alia*, higher education institutions. We are required to publish a Disability Equality Scheme, by 4 December 2006, which demonstrates how we intend to fulfil our general and specific duties. We are required to involve disabled people in the development of the scheme. The Scheme must set out the way in which disabled people have been involved in the development of the scheme, our methods for impact assessment and the steps we will take towards fulfilling the general duty (an 'action plan'). The Scheme must also set out our arrangements for gathering information in relation to employment and our delivery of education, and it must record our arrangements for using the information gathered, in particular in reviewing the effectiveness of our action plan and in preparing subsequent Disability Equality Schemes. We must review our Scheme every three years and we must publish a report setting out the steps we have taken under our action plan and the results of our information gathering.

The College meets these requirements in its SES.

## Gender

The Equality Act 2006 sets out a new positive duty on public bodies to promote gender equality. Under the new duty, and through all relevant functions, public authorities are required to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination and harassment that is unlawful under the Sex Discrimination Act and discrimination that is unlawful under the Equal Pay Act
- promote equality of opportunity between men and women. RuTC will be subject to the new duty and we are required to produce a Gender Equality Scheme by 6 April 2007. We are required to consult our employees and stakeholders in drawing up our equality scheme and to publish annual reports of our progress. We must review the Scheme at least every three years. We are required to develop and publish a policy on developing equal Pay arrangements between men and women and to conduct and publish gender impact assessments in employment, policy and services.

The College meets these requirements in its SES.