



Equalities and Inclusiveness Annual Report

2010-2011

1. Purpose of the Report

This is the annual report on Equalities and Inclusiveness presented by the Equalities Committee. It outlines:

- A summary of actions and outcomes of the Equalities Committee for the Academic Year 2010-2011
- The results of monitoring and review exercises.
- Proposals for action for the future.

2. Terms of Reference

The Equalities Committee terms of reference are attached in Appendix 1. The progress and achievement against the group's action planning for 2010-2011 are detailed throughout the report. The Equalities Committee is chaired by the College Principal who provides clear and purposeful leadership to ensure that governance and management addresses legislative requirements.

3. Policy, Procedures and Plans

The College has an Equalities and Inclusiveness Policy and Procedures Framework which underpins all the equality schemes, policies and plans and sets out the context, vision, values and principles and responsibilities for equality and diversity within the College.

The Equalities Committee utilised the Equality Act 2010 to direct the work of the group during session 2010-2011.

During session 2010-2011, the Senior Management Team (SMT) and Equalities Committee reviewed and amended the existing equalities action plans and all current College policies and procedures in line with the College Policy Review Schedule in order to ensure compliance with new equality legislation. Reviews and amendments were informed by staff self evaluation activities, learner focus groups, and feedback from the annual Professional Development Planning (PDP) process. It was agreed to combine all the equalities schemes/policies into one Single Equality Scheme/Policy.

A devolved annual budget was agreed for staff development activities and a staff development programme was implemented to take forward the priorities identified from PDP sessions in addition to meeting the needs of the current equality action plans and future legislation.

The College has an Equalities Impact Assessment procedure and a timetable so that all college policies and procedures undergo an impact assessment. Data generated by this assessment informs amendments to policies and procedures in order to raise awareness of equalities issues among all stakeholders and ensure equality of provision to recipients of that provision.

The College Equalities Committee completed a self-evaluation exercise, The Equality and Fairness Checklist, which gave indicators in relation to good employment practice. Actions from that exercise, particularly in relation to redundancy and retirement practices and procedures, have been completed and passed to the relevant committees for approval.

4. Partnerships and Networks

The Equalities Committee, chaired by the Principal, is responsible for advising the Senior Management Team on the development and implementation of the current race, disability and gender schemes as well as the promotion of the public equality duties and legislation relating to the equality strands of age, sexual orientation and religion or belief.

Representation from staff, students and from external stakeholders and agencies is important for effective engagement, involvement and consultation on equality matters. The Equalities Committee currently has representation from "Forward Mid", a disability rights campaigning organisation located in Midlothian and this year an equality consultant with experience of the post-16 education sectors. The Committee is seeking to expand its membership to include other equality groups and networks.

The College was sad to hear of the demise of SKILL Scotland, the organisation for disabled students in Scotland, although it continues to receive support from Scotland's Colleges in relation to access and inclusion matters. The College is a member of Skillnet Edinburgh, an organisation promoting the social and economic equality of minority ethnic communities through education, training and employment.

The Administration Manager is a member of the Operational Group of the Staff Development Collaborative Group, which plans joint training on equality and inclusion.

The Depute Principal attends the South East Forum whose remit is to widen access, increase participation and raise the learning aspirations of learners in the South East of Scotland.

The Principal is a member of The Residential Colleges Group, a UK wide organisation of residential adult learning colleges.

College links have been established via the Scottish Government with Simon Fraser University, Vancouver and St. Andrew's Society, Chicago. In 2010 the Principal and Depute Principal met in Chicago with the Presidents of the St Andrew's Societies of North America. These links have been beneficial in helping establish the College as a centre for Celtic Studies. During 2010-2011 the College welcomed an intern

from the University of Wisconsin and received a visit from the Possum Holler Fiddlers from Missouri, USA who participated in the annual Celtic Festival in August 2011.

5. Staff Development

All members of staff, committee members and members of college groups and teams carried out annual self evaluation activities as individuals and in groups, in order to reflect on the impact of equality on their particular job role and responsibilities. This reflective activity resulted in action planning for improvement with SMART objectives being set and systematic monitoring in place in order to judge progress towards achieving these objectives.

In addition, clear guidance is now provided to staff on how to deal with discrimination, or harassment within different learning and teaching situations. During the academic year both academic and support staff attended a variety of staff development activities both internally and externally. Topics included E-Assessment, Striving for Sustainability, Dealing with Stress and Creating Systemic Change in relation to Equality and Diversity.

Academic staff identified a number of training priorities throughout the session which are ongoing. In relation to equality, diversity and inclusion these have included:

- Training in interactive technology for curriculum development
- Moodle training to create online content and support online students
- Autistic spectrum training
- Mental Health First Aid: and
- Training for audio note-takers

Support staff training needs have been identified through the Personal Development Plan (PDP) process and training is ongoing. All teaching staff have received ongoing training in MOODLE to enable them to produce and deliver the Blended Learning Award Programme.

Throughout the year the College received funding from The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) as part of its Equality and Diversity Strategy. This funding was used to engage an equalities consultant to:

- Develop a single equalities policy and framework
- Produce updated equalities reports
- Advise SMT and the Equalities Committee on the implications of recent legislation
- Offer training to the academic team on equalities legislation and the implications for curriculum development and student support; and
- Advise on and undertake equality impact assessment in relation to college policies.

6. Students

Newbattle Abbey College offers Arts and Humanities Awards on both a full-time and open learning basis. In 2010-2011 there were 60 students on the full-time residential Awards programme and on the open learning programme. This two-year blended learning course is delivered online and widens access to students who cannot commit to a full-time programme. The course also includes residential sessions in the College.

In addition, a variety of short courses were available such as: Roots Family History, Gardening, Newbattle in Scottish History, Scottish and Irish Gaelic Language, Beekeeping and Introduction to the Scots Language, Rural Skills, Art of Storytelling, Irish Dance and Taster Courses. A total of 118 students enrolled on these short courses throughout the session.

The Student Retention Ratio figure (SRR2) for course completion for 2010-2011 was 70% with 56% of students progressing to university, 28% progressing to higher education in FE Colleges and 16% progressing to employment or self-employment.

The College produces a statistical analysis each year in relation to award enquiries and applications in order to gauge enquiries, applications and acceptances. Information is also included on source information used by prospective students. The majority of enquiries came from the internet and newspapers and magazines such as the Daily Record, Big Issue and the Metro. In addition a geographical analysis is also made of award enquiries. Whilst the majority of enquiries came from the Edinburgh area, there was also across a geographical spread across mainland Scotland and the islands as well as England and Wales.

Induction sessions for new students include discussion about equality and anti-discrimination. This explicit reference at induction provides a clear signal to students of how seriously the College takes issues of equality and anti-discrimination. Students are informed about the College equality schemes and policies and the support available to students, including how to report discrimination or harassment. Equality and anti-discrimination provisions are written into learning contracts and classroom etiquette guidelines. In addition guidance tutors are given appropriate information throughout the year to pass on to students. Equality statements are now included in student handbooks. The Student Handbooks have a very clear statement on the front cover regarding the College's commitment to equality and diversity: *"Newbattle Abbey College is committed to the pursuit of equality of opportunity, promoting diversity and challenging discrimination."*

For the Awards programme the College evaluates the Induction for both full-time and open learning students. On the whole students reported that they were made to feel welcome and that the guidance groups were helpful in enabling them to settle into the academic side of college life. The best things about induction week

for the students were meeting new people and the easy-going, friendly atmosphere. Helpful, friendly staff who made an effort with team-building and helping students to settle in were also commended. Criticisms of the induction week were mainly concerned with students having to wait around and the lack of pace between activities. These evaluations allow staff in the College to plan ahead and improve their plans for successful induction.

7. Equality Impact Assessment

The College has a robust and detailed system to ensure impact assessment is carried out on all College policies and procedures. Impact assessment has been carried out on key policies relating to staff and students and a timetable is in place for the remainder. The College has undertaken to review the equality impact assessment procedures in the light of the new Equality Act to make them more streamlined and accessible to members of academic and administrative staff whom the College is keen to involve in the process. Throughout the academic year equality impact assessments were carried out and details of the revised policy circulated to relevant staff and students. These included:

- Absence from Work Ill health Policy
- Staff Recruitment and Selection
- Smoke Free Policy
- Staff Professional Development Review Procedure
- Staff Induction Handbook
- Approaches to Learning and Teaching
- Core Skills and Learning Support
- Assessment and Moderation
- Student Admissions Policy
- Student Complaints- Academic Matters
- Academic Handbook
- Residential Student Handbook
- A to Z Student Handbook
- Quality Assurance, Improvement and Enhancement Procedures Policy
- ICT User Agreements Staff and Students
- E-mail Policy
- Child Safeguarding and Adults at Risk Policy
- Fire Evacuation Procedure
- Procedure for Completion of Accident/Incident Book
- Employee Health and Safety Handbook
- Student Health and Safety Handbook
- Travel Expenses Policy
- Communication Policy
- Disaster Recovery Policy
- Bomb Threat Procedure

- Fee waiver Policy

In addition the Marketing Committee commenced a review of the College website from an equality and diversity point of view in the light of comments and suggestions from Forward Mid and a student on placement from Heriot Watt University.

8. Race Equality, Cultural Diversity and Religion or Belief

The College has a Race Equality Policy and a Policy on Religion and Belief. Both of these were revised in 2011 and will be included in the new single equality policy.

The College continued to focus on the maintenance and improvement of partnership arrangements with external organisations in order to improve the access and inclusion of black and minority ethnic students, international students, staff and members of the public.

Equality, inclusiveness and the promotion of cultural diversity in classroom displays continues to be a priority in developing new learning and teaching materials. Teaching staff have embedded well cultural diversity, equality and wider human rights issues both within the curriculum and extra-curricular activities. The Arts and Humanities programme is a good vehicle for meaningful academic exploration of these topics in a national, international, historical and contemporary context. Extra-curricular activities include celebration of cultural diversity and sharing of experience within a multi-cultural and mixed nationality learner group.

In addition, Newbattle Abbey College held its second Celtic Festival on 21 May 2011. Over 3,000 people of all ages attended the festival, held in the main building, ground and woodlands. The festival was a celebration of traditional music, dance, woodland heritage, Scottish culture and crafts. Workshops were offered in archaeology, local history, Gaelic, Scots Language, creative writing and traditional dance from Scottish, Irish and Breton cultures.

Newbattle Abbey College also celebrated its unique partnership with University of Wisconsin by hosting a joint Ceilidh in March 2011. More than 60 staff and students from the College joined their Wisconsin counterparts to enjoy a night of Scottish culture, including Ceilidh dancing, poetry reading, music and singing in the crypt, with some surprise cultural additions featuring along the way. Mande Akason, originally from Pine Island, Minnesota, said: *This type of event is great to celebrate on-going successful relationships and bring together students and staff to celebrate the mix of different backgrounds and cultures.*

The College welcomed two students from Burma who enrolled on the Arts and Humanities Awards course in September 2010. The two mature students, originally from Rangoon, decided to return to further education to launch their future

careers and help improve political relations between Burma and other countries. They have been impressed with the community spirit at the college and the welcome they have received from staff and students. *“The lecturers provide excellent feedback on course work and their tuition is excellent. The location and environment of the college is beautiful, it has really given me a new lease of life.”*

The College provides a Calendar of Religious Festivals and basic information is made available to staff regarding cultural and faith matters.

The College Policy on Religion and Belief deals with issues such as dress code, religious observance, leave for religious festivals, extended leave, food requirements and offensive actions or behaviour. In the College, equalities monitoring during 2010-2011 indicated that the percentage of students from a minority ethnic background was just over 8%.

The staffing return for 2010-2011 to the Scottish Funding Council identified just over 22 full time equivalent staff, the majority of whom were Scottish or English. There were no minority ethnic staff.

Students and staff are not asked to provide information on their religion or belief.

9. Gender Equality

The College has a Policy statement on Gender Equality, a Gender Equality Scheme (GES) 2007-2010 with associated action plan and a Policy statement on Equal Pay. These are scheduled to be incorporated into the new single equality policy in 2011-2012.

The Gender Policies make reference to transgender, gender reassignment, sexual harassment and employment and equal pay.

Previous consultation and involvement exercises in relation to gender equality have indicated the following priorities and the College is continuing to address these:

- Barriers to employment and learning such as childcare, flexible working and support for part-time study;
- Better analysis of monitoring mechanisms;
- Staff development; and
- Building links and partnerships with organisations that focus on gender equality.

The Administration Team provide data on staff recruitment and retention. The annual staffing return to the Scottish Funding Council for 2010-2011 indicates:

| Gender | Teaching staff | Non-teaching staff |
|--------|----------------|--------------------|
| Female | 37.5% | 58% |
| Male | 62.5% | 42% |

This is comparable with the previous year.

In addition gender statistics for the College students for 2010-2011 are as follows:

| Female | Male |
|--------|------|
| 29% | 71% |

This figure shows an increase in male participation from 2009-2010 (62%) and a decrease in female participation from 2009-2010 (38%)

10. Age equality

The College does not have a specific policy on age but abides by the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 which prohibits age discrimination in employment and vocational training and will be including age in their single equalities policy in 2011-2012.

The majority of teaching staff are between the ages of 30 and 60, and in the non-teaching staff the majority are between the ages of 30 and 50.

The age breakdown of students for 2010-2011 is as follows:

| 20-30 | 30-40 | 40-50 | 50-60 | 60+ |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| 38.7% | 38.7% | 8.1% | 12.9% | 1.6% |

In terms of students there has been a slight increase from 2009-2010 in those students between the ages of 30 and 40 with a subsequent decrease in those between the ages of 40 and 50. Students in the other age categories have stayed about the same as last year.

11. Disability Equality and Accessibility

The College has a Policy Statement on Disability Equality, a Disability Equality Scheme and an action plan to support its implementation. These will again be incorporated into the single equalities policy in 2011-2012.

Emphasis this year focused on prioritising improvements in services and functions for disabled people including any reasonable adjustments; maintaining and developing partnership arrangements with Forward Mid and other disability-related organisations in order to improve access and inclusion of disabled staff and

members of the public; ensuring the maintenance and upkeep of facilities including signage, emergency and evacuation procedures, health and safety and ICT access for disabled people; encouraging disability disclosure by staff by providing information on definitions of disability and support available and considering how the Library could play a more proactive role in supporting equality in learning, teaching and curriculum design.

The College undertakes an annual “Equalities Walkabout” with a disabled person. This resulted in a number of suggestions and recommendations for the improvement of accessibility in relation to the main entrances, student kitchen area, crypt and ramps to the armoury. In addition the College agreed to look into the provision of stand alone shower chairs in the student residential block.

The College is committed to doing everything it can to improve accessibility without destroying the character of the grade A listed building. The College is at the very early stages of considering refurbishment of the residential block.

Guidelines on the quality and equality of learning and teaching materials have informed college staff and ensured the accessibility of learning and teaching materials for disabled learners.

In addition, the College is continuing to diversify the curriculum and update the ICT infrastructure and now has most learning and teaching materials in electronic format. Staff have undergone training to ensure that the use of images and the content of learning and teaching materials promote positive attitudes to disabled people.

The College is continuing to work towards the key objectives in relation to disability equality:

- Removing barriers and changing attitudes that prevent disabled people getting access to education and employment;
- Promoting disability equality;
- Working together with disabled people, disability organisations and disability access groups to achieve equality of opportunity;
- Creating a culture where staff and students feel able to declare their disability so that accurate information is available to help t look at reasonable adjustments, priority areas and set targets; and
- Creating a culture where harassment, bullying, victimisation and discrimination is unacceptable and will be stopped.

In 2010-2011 equalities monitoring of students indicated the following information with regard to disability and impairment:

| | |
|---------------------|-------|
| No known disability | 67.7% |
| Disability | 32.3% |

There are currently no staff who have disclosed a disability to the College. However, the College is aware that this does not mean there are no staff who fall under the protection of disability legislation. In addition, as the College has only 27 members of staff, 55% of whom are full-time with the rest part-time, to publish any data on staff disability may result in staff being easily identified and would breach confidentiality.

12. Sexual Orientation Equality

The College has a Policy on Sexual Orientation which will be incorporated into the single equality policy. The policy makes clear that homophobic abuse, harassment or bullying is a serious disciplinary offence and will be dealt with under the appropriate procedure. The College does not ask for information regarding the sexual orientation of students or staff, but will provide a supportive environment for staff and students who wish it to be known that they are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transsexual (LGBT). LGBT issues have been included in equality training in addition to internal attitudinal surveys and monitoring of complaints.

13. Discrimination and Harassment

The College has a Policy Statement on Discrimination and Harassment, due to be incorporated and updated into the single equality policy in 2011-2012, which states that no student or member of staff should be subjected to any form of harassment, bullying or discrimination because of their race, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation or religion or belief. Procedures for dealing with complaints, both informal and formal, investigation and recording of incidents are outlined. In 2010-2011, there were no reports of discrimination or harassment.

14. Involvement and Consultation

Student representation is in place on most College Committees including the Board of Directors, the Equalities Committee, the Learning and Teaching Committee and the Health and Safety Committee. Student representatives meet with Senior Management at least three times per year and are invited to attend most other groups and committees on an ad hoc basis. Feedback from learners and staff is obtained following "inclusiveness" workshops and is generated in a way that guarantees confidentiality and encourages transparency of response and a high level of participation.

The College website currently contains three questionnaires relating to equality: one for staff and students on disability and gender equality and one targeted at staff in relation to staff development and disability equality. Stakeholders and members of the public can also access these questionnaires and take the opportunity to inform our practice and procedure. These will be updated for the single equality policy in 2011-2012.

In addition, staff and students are encouraged to submit questions anonymously to Senior Management and these are discussed at monthly focus groups meetings.

Community partners and external consultants were extensively involved in the evaluation of the Celtic Festival in May 2011. Their recommendations will be incorporated in the planning of the 2012 event.

15. Quality Framework

Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education (HMIE) undertook an Annual Engagement Visit to the College in May 2011. The visit focused on high quality learning, learner engagement and quality culture. In terms of high quality learning the review found that the college continues to make effective use of performance indicators on early retention, retention and attainment. In terms of learning and teaching, learners are engaged well in leading tutorials and in providing peer support to other learners, a practice which is now embedded with other units. Teaching staff are able to adapt their approaches to the preferred learning styles of the learners. As part of the self-evaluation process, the college has introduced mid-unit evaluations which have allowed for early intervention to change learning and teaching approaches to those better suited to meet the needs of learners. This approach to self-evaluation now includes all college staff.

The review found that staff and Board members of the college have many opportunities to engage with learners on a formal and informal basis, from representation on committees, internal review, mid and end of unit evaluations, questionnaires, focus groups and through social activities.

The review also found that a high proportion of college learners progressed to university and higher education college programmes.

In relation to equality and diversity, the review found that the college was responding well to legislative requirements.

The college ran two Quality Weeks in 2010-2011, in October 2010 and in February 2011. In October 2010, all college teams were involved in the programme which included several team and cross-college activities, focusing on quality development in all aspects of college life.

Highlights included:

- An update by the Principal on the local and national context for quality development
- An analysis of the diverse range and varied needs of college students, clients and partners
- A summary of major college events in 2010-2011
- Sharing good practice in self-evaluation, involving ICT and the Academic Team

- Identifying gaps in self-evaluation strategies within teams and across the college and producing related action plans
- Improving methods for engaging students, clients and partners in self-evaluation
- Engaging in a cross-team challenge, linked to a college event.

Gaps identified related to a lack of a consistent system within the Administration, Facilities and Housekeeping teams to evaluate the quality of service offered to students and to act on those findings. It was also felt that the college does not receive sufficient feedback from short course attendees and casual visitors. It was agreed to conduct 360° evaluation of all teams and action plans were drawn up for each Team.

Quality Week in February 2011 reviewed progress with the Quality Action Plans and concentrated on preparing staff for the Annual Engagement Visit of HMle (now Education Scotland). In addition the week also gave staff the opportunity to discuss the implications of College budget cuts for 2011-2012 and plan a cross-college response.

The Facilities Team completed a 360° self-evaluation of housekeeping and a revision of Room Inventory. The Administration Team completed a 360° self-evaluation and report and the Academic Team completed a resources audit and a review of the Blended learning Course and Action Plan. Other action plan objectives are in the process of being completed.

16. Equalities Data

Data collection for students is taken from the student enrolment form at the start of the course. This may not always be a true reflection of equality monitoring, particularly in relation to disabled student numbers as disability can be disclosed once a student is on course and enrolment forms are completed. Although students are encouraged to disclose a disability at various times throughout their course and college life, this may not always feed back into the college statistics.

The College continues to work towards improving the monitoring systems of employment data to enable it to judge the impact of disability on recruitment and selection. The College is working towards benchmarking the College Staff Profile against local and national profiles in order to look at the impact of any discrepancies.

In addition, the College is committed to promoting the benefits for staff of disclosing a disability. Monitoring of staff usually requires that they indicate a disability, rather than indicate the access or other requirements that they may need to support them in working effectively.

The College will seek to further improve the collection and analysis of future equalities data, particularly in the light of the requirements of the Equality Act and the new specific equality duties. However, as the College has only 15 full time and 12 part-time members of staff, to publish equality data on staff may result in staff being easily identified and would breach confidentiality.

17. Moving Forward

The Senior Management Team and the Equalities Committee are reviewing the college's Equality, Diversity and Inclusiveness Policies and Procedures to reflect the changes to legislation underpinned by the Equality Act 2010. A new Equality and Diversity Policy in 2011, updating the College Equalities and Inclusiveness Policy to cover all of the protected characteristics, will incorporate all the new provisions of the Equality Act. It will include an action plan for impact assessment to include all protected characteristics from April 2011, and a timescale for the development of equality outcomes based on evidence and informed by the involvement of staff, students, equality groups and communities by April 2012.

Appendix 1

Equalities Committee: Terms of Reference

The Equalities Committee was set up in response to the College Strategic and Operational Plan objectives to establish the College as an inclusive and access oriented national learning centre. It reports to the Senior Management Team.

Remit

- Identify, develop and monitor policy and procedures concerned with equality of opportunity and inclusiveness
- Monitor the effects of the Race Equality Policy, Disability Discrimination Policy and other legislative requirements relating to equality and inclusiveness
- Carry out audits and conduct self evaluation to contribute to the College's Quality Assurance and Improvement
- Inform Senior Management Team and report to Board of Directors through the Estates and Finance Committee
- Agree Action Plan, and once agreed, inform the Senior Management Team for implementation (e.g. Design and implementation of Staff Development programme as it relates to Equalities and Inclusiveness).

Membership

The group has a membership of eight, drawn from the academic, administrative, facilities and catering staff and students. It also has two external advisers. The Group is chaired by the Principal.

Working Practices

The Group meets at least four times a year and may, if there are specific tasks to be completed, delegate work to a sub group. Action minutes are taken and circulated to the group. The Group has an action plan that is drawn from the Operational Plan.