



Equalities and Inclusiveness Annual Report

2009-2010

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 2009-2010
- 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 2009-2010 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 its action plan to direct the work of the group during session 2009-2010. The action plan was created using input from and active involvement of students, staff and external stakeholders including members of 'Forward Mid' recruited onto the College Equalities Committee. The action plan for 2009-2010 was also informed by the College Race Equality Scheme, Disability Equality Scheme and Gender Equality Scheme following approval of these schemes by the Board of Directors of the College.

During session 2009-2010, the Senior Management Team (SMT) and the 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. Reviews and amendments were informed by staff self evaluation activities, learner focus groups, and feedback from the annual Professional Development Planning (PDP) process.

A devolved annual budget was agreed for staff development activities and a staff development programme was implemented to meet the needs of the action plans created from the College Gender Equality,

Race Equality and Disability Equality Schemes and Policies in addition to the requirements of the impending Equality Act. It was agreed to combine all the equalities schemes/policies into one Single Equality Scheme/Policy.

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.

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. In 2009-10 an equality consultant with experience of the post-16 education sectors also joined the Committee. The Committee is seeking to expand its membership to include other equality groups and networks.

The College is a member of SKILL Scotland, the organisation for disabled students in Scotland and Skillnet Edinburgh, an organisation promoting the social and economic equality of minority ethnic communities through education, training and employment.

The Depute Principal is a member of the Operational Group of the East of Scotland Staff Development Collaborative Group, which plans joint training on equality and inclusion.

In addition, 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. This post includes membership of the National Working Group to implement the measures from "Learning for All".

College links have been established via the Scottish Government with Simon Fraser University, Vancouver and St. Andrew's Society, Chicago.

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, staff received equalities training from SKILL Scotland in relation to disability and inclusion. During Quality Week in October, staff development workshop activities were taken from Scotland's Colleges Equality Diversity Toolkit (EDI Toolkit). In addition, Marshall Training, Coaching and Consultancy (Marshall TCC), provided training to staff from administration, facilities and estates and housekeeping staff on the new provisions in the Equality Act due to come into force on 1 October 2010. This training covered the context for equality and diversity in FE/HE; the roles and responsibilities of staff in relation to equality and diversity; the whole college approach to the promotion of equality; the use of language in talking about equality and diversity; understanding the importance of getting the ethos right in relation to equality and diversity and specific issues in relation to the public equality duties. In addition a separate session was held for academic staff highlighting what the new Equality Act would mean for learning and teaching.

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.

6. Students

Recruitment figures for 2009/10 academic session in both full-time and part-time Newbattle Arts and Humanities Awards have been very positive. Sixty students enrolled on the full-time Access course in September, with a further ten students enrolling on the College's blended learning course in October.

The 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.

The College also has this year twenty students studying Everyday English Access 3 in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Everyday English is the College's online language course delivered in partnership with an Edinburgh based voluntary organisation, the Burmese Education Scholarship Trust (BEST). Performance indicators for the Award Programme are as follows:

Effectiveness	07/08	08/09	09/10
Early retention	88%	88.5%	90%
Retention	70%	71%	70%
Student outcome/achievement	61%	65.2%	77%
Unit achievement (SARU)	81%	92.5%	97%

The additional recurrent grant from the Scottish Funding Council was invested in Learning Support services to help meet the diverse and complex needs and expectations of a range of learners.

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."*

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:

- The Absence from Work Guidelines
- The Stress Management Policy
- Disclosure of Criminal Records Policy
- Alcohol and Drugs Policy
- Staff Development Policy and Procedures
- Bomb Threat Procedures
- Records Management and Document Retention Policy and Procedures
- Fire Evacuation Procedure
- Procedure for completion of accident/incident book

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 are due for revision in 2011 and will be revised in the light of the new Equality Act and included in the new single equality policy.

The Race Equality Action Plan contains four priority areas relating to implementation, monitoring and evaluation, staff and students. Emphasis this year focused 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. In addition the monitoring system established by the College to monitor the difference in the conversion of applications to enrolments for people from ethnic minority groups and international students found that some of the issues were beyond the control of the College itself; namely the difficulty in obtaining visas to enter and study in the UK.

Equality, inclusiveness and the promotion of cultural diversity in classroom displays continues to be a priority in developing new learning and teaching materials.

Informal mentoring systems are in place for minority ethnic students via the academic team, college sub wardens and using informal networking from previous students. Regulation 1.1 guidance sessions can also identify and related problems. Support for Learning policies have been revised in order to provide appropriate support to bilingual students who require learning support.

Student guidelines are in place for all students explaining what constitutes plagiarism. This guidance has been written in a way that is accessible for students whose first language is not English.

All learning and teaching materials currently in use have been audited using the quality and equality of learning toolkit.

In addition, Newbattle Abbey College held its first Celtic Festival on 29th May 2010. Approximately, 4,000 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 storytelling, local history, creative writing and traditional dance from Scottish, Irish and Breton cultures.

The Equalities Committee considered how best housekeeping and facilities staff in accommodation services could work to promote good relations between people of different racial groups and different religious beliefs. 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 2009-2010 indicated that the majority of students were Scottish (83%) or English (12%). These figures relate only to full-time access students and do not include those studying online, distance learning or studying overseas.

The staffing return for 2009-2010 to the Scottish Funding Council indicated that in terms of teaching staff there was an almost equal mix of White Scottish and White English ethnic categories.

Students 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 were due to be reviewed in 2010, but in the light of the impending Equality Act in October 2010, this was delayed with a view to incorporating other equality areas in a single policy and taking into account new areas of legislation. This will now take place in the early part of 2011.

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 2009-2010 indicates that:-

Gender	Teaching staff (8)	Non-teaching staff (21)
Female	37.5%	57%
Male	62.5%	43%

In addition gender statistics for the College students for 2009-2010 are as follows:

Female	Male
38%	62%

Among the Burmese students the gender breakdown is as follows:

Female	Male
50%	50%

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. This applies to all individuals in work or seeking work or access to training, to all employers and to all providers of vocational training, including further and higher education institutions.

The majority of teaching staff are between the ages of 50 and 59, and in the non-teaching staff the majority fit into the age ranges of 30-49 and 50-59.

The age breakdown of students for 2009-2010 is as follows:

19-24	25-29	30-49	50-59
27%	14%	51%	8%

11. Disability Equality and Accessibility

The College has a Policy Statement on Disability Equality, a Disability Equality Scheme (DES) 2010-2013 and an action plan to support its implementation.

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 which have now been completed. The Main House toilets and reception area were refurbished during the academic year. In addition an operational review of the student residential accommodation and facilities were undertaken and short-term maintenance and redecoration was carried out.

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 their 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 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 2009-2010 equalities monitoring of students indicated the following information with regard to disability and impairment:

No known disability	74%
Dyslexia	14%
Deaf/hearing impairment	1%
Unseen disability, e.g. diabetes, epilepsy	7%
Disability not listed above	4%

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 29 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 is due for review in 2011 and 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 this year in addition to internal attitudinal surveys and monitoring of complaints.

13. Discrimination and Harassment

The College has a Policy Statement on Discrimination and Harassment 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 2009-2010, there 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 Marketing Group 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.

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 Pan Celtic Programme in 2009-10 programme. Their recommendations will be incorporated in the planning of the 2011 event.

15. Quality Framework

Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education (HMIe) undertook an annual engagement visit to the College in December 2009. The main findings commended the College on the use of its virtual learning environment (VLE) and online materials to support blended learning approaches. In addition, learner engagement was highlighted as a positive development, both in terms of student representation on College committees and the Board of Management (BOM), as well as supporting the encouragement of learners to engage constructively with their own learning.

During 2009-2010, the Academic Team extended self-evaluation strategies through the annual quality cycle; this included earlier student evaluation of learning and teaching and related action plans. In response to student evaluation, the Academic Team introduced additional core skills support in ICT, language and maths at an earlier stage in the academic year.

In April 2010, the ICT Co-ordinator completed a 360 degree evaluation of ICT services across the College. This involved students and staff. A related action plan was circulated to all staff and a student focus group considered the key issues emerging in more detail. This resulted in improved ICT facilities for students.

A successful Quality Week, focusing on self-evaluation was held in February 2010 and involved all staff teams.

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 16 full time and 13 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 staff, administrative and housekeeping 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.