



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

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Introduction

At Harris Manchester College we are committed to equality and diversity, in both law and spirit.

We have always sought to be an inclusive community. The College was originally formed with the aim of providing higher education opportunities to nonconformists who may otherwise have been excluded on the basis of faith. When the college arrived in Oxford in the 1890s, it was already co-educational, which made it unusual at that time, and its student body was both international and ethnically diverse. Now, as a college where people of all ages study, we strive to erase the barriers of age to give people at many different stages in their lives and from all backgrounds a first, second or third chance at higher education.

We embrace the contribution of every member of our institution and celebrate cultural diversity in the College. The diversity of our global community of students and staff is one of our greatest assets. Inclusion of all, irrespective of gender, sexual identity, race, ethnicity or class, is one of our foundational principles in our quest for excellence in education and in creating a collegial and supportive space in which to live and work.

Our core values include equality of opportunity and non-discrimination, which we expect all members of the College to uphold in all our practices and activities. In our pursuit of knowledge and the highest academic standards, we aim to promote open and critical enquiry, free debate and discussion of all points of view in an atmosphere of mutual respect, tolerance and recognition of the sensitivities of all members of our community.

The College also has a unique mission as Oxford's only College exclusively for undergraduate and postgraduate students over the age of 21¹. As such we seek to meet the educational needs of a society where people are living longer and may wish to go to university at different stages in their life, or may want to rethink their careers and retrain for a range of personal or professional reasons. This ensures

¹ As set out in the [College Statutes](#) and Charter granted to the College in 1995.

that age (one of the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010) is at the heart of the College's approach to higher education.

1. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Statement

This policy applies to all members of the Harris Manchester College community, including students, academic members, support staff, applicants, and visitors.

In relation to students, the College aims to provide education of excellent quality for students, whatever their background. In pursuit of this aim, the College is committed to using its best endeavours to ensure that all of its activities are governed by principles of equality of opportunity, and that all students are helped to achieve their full academic potential. This statement applies to, but is not limited to, admissions, learning and research provision, welfare and support services, and access to College accommodation.

In respect of staff, the policy and practice of the College require that all staff are afforded equal opportunities within employment and that entry into employment with the College and the progression within employment will be determined only by personal merit and the application of criteria which are related to the duties of each particular post and the relevant salary structure. In all cases, ability to perform the job is the primary consideration.

Subject to statutory provisions, no applicant, student or member of staff will be treated less favourably than another because of any of the nine protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act 2010:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership (only in relation to eliminating discrimination in employment)
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins)
- Religion or belief (including lack of belief)
- Sex
- Sexual orientation.

2. Objectives

The Equality Act 2010 provides a legal framework to protect individuals from unfair treatment and promote equality of opportunity for all. Under the Act, public bodies, including Harris Manchester College, are subject to the equality duty and they must have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Having 'due regard' means consciously considering the three aims listed above as part of our decision-making processes and when reviewing or developing policies. Due regard for advancing equality involves:

- removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics;
- taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people;
- encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

Fostering good relations involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups.

The Act has placed further specific duties on public bodies (including all Higher Education Institutions) to publish information annually to show their compliance with the Equality Duty, and to set and publish at least one equality objective every four years.

3. Commitment

Harris Manchester College is committed to fostering an inclusive environment which promotes equality, values diversity and maintains a working, learning and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all its staff and students are respected.

As a College, our commitment is built around the following principles:

Equality	ensuring everyone has the same opportunities to fulfil their potential free from discrimination.
Inclusion	ensuring everyone feels comfortable to be themselves at College and feels the worth of their contribution.
Diversity	the celebration of individual differences amongst the collegiate community.
Equity	recognising barriers and that some groups are more advantaged than others, and putting measures in place to eliminate these barriers, ensuring equal opportunities for all.

We will actively support diversity, equity and inclusion and ensure that all our members are valued and treated with dignity and respect. We want to encourage everyone in our College to reach their potential.

To support these aims, Harris Manchester College will seek to embed equality in all of its activities and will seek to promote awareness of equality and foster good practice. The College is committed to a programme of action to support its equality policy, to monitoring its effectiveness, and to publishing information on progress towards its equality aims.

Harris Manchester College will ensure that this policy is made available for all students and employees and made known to all applicants for employment.

Harris Manchester College will ensure that steps are taken to avoid the occurrence of discrimination, whether direct or indirect, and to promote good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. Any discriminatory behaviour, including harassment or bullying by individuals or groups, will be regarded extremely seriously and could be regarded as grounds for disciplinary action, which may include expulsion or dismissal.

Breaches of the Equality policy will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure, with reference where appropriate to the College's Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy.

4. Responsibilities

Governing Body, chaired by the Principal, has responsibility for ensuring compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty and specific duties as required under the Equality Act 2010. All line-managers are responsible for the day-to-day implementation of this policy and for ensuring that equality is embedded in the work of their teams.

Members of the College community have a duty to treat each other with respect, courtesy and consideration at all times. The College expects all its staff and students to take personal responsibility for familiarising themselves with this policy.

7. Review

All policies are reviewed regularly to assess their effectiveness and to ensure that they remain current and comply with all relevant legislation.

The College also notes the update for students and staff published by the University following the recent legal and regulatory developments:

[Update for students and staff following the recent legal and regulatory developments | University of Oxford.](#)

Harris Manchester – EDI Objectives 2024-2028

Improve Accessibility on the College Site.		
<i>Undertake a programme of interventions to make the College more accessible to users with physical disabilities.</i>		
Specific Objective	Progress June 2026	
Establish an Accessibility Working Group with representation from across the College community including the student body.	The Accessibility Working Group was set up in May 2023 and will continue to convene termly from Michaelmas 2026.	
Complete an accessibility survey with support from the University Accessibility Team.	Completed and ongoing considerations of the different options, please see below.	
Develop a detailed program of interventions aimed at providing practical improvements.	Actions from the Accessibility survey have been divided into three categories: those which can be incorporated into the routine maintenance programme, those which require some additional planning and/or professional guidance, and major interventions requiring significant capital investment. Routine maintenance and those actions that require some additional planning and/or professional guidance are underway. Major interventions requiring significant capital investment have also been planned. Funding for further interventions will be discussed with the new Development Director when they take up their post in September 2026.	

Promoting equality in the recruitment of staff		
<i>To take specific practical steps to promote racial equality during the recruitment process for staff.</i>		
Specific Objective	Progress June 2026	
As part of its ongoing HR development project, the College is considering the use of specialist Human Resources software to assist with recruitment, in order to enable use of 'real-time' monitoring data to assist promotion of diversity and inclusion.	The College has appointed an HR Manager who has been exploring different HR software providers that offer Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) recruitment and the promotion of diversity and inclusion.	
Ensuring that consideration is given to promoting a wide pool of applicants when posts are advertised – including the language used; where advertisements are placed; which consultants are used; justifiability of seeking previous University experience	The language in adverts is being monitored, and different publications/job boards are used to attract a wide pool of applicants.	
The College is investigating equality and diversity training for all staff relevant to their roles, but with particular reference to those involved in recruitment.	Equality and diversity training for all staff relevant to their roles has been identified through the University of Oxford platform including those involved in recruitment.	

Embed Public Sector Equality Considerations into College Committees and Governing Body		
<i>Ensure Public Sector Equality duty is a standing item on the agenda for all College committees and is given due consideration as part of the decision making process.</i>		
Specific Objective	Progress June 2026	
Ensure PSED is a standing item on the agenda of all College committee	PSED continues to be a standing item on the agenda of all the College committee body.	
Consider specialist training for members of College committees on the application of PSED in practice during decision making.	HR Manager is exploring specialist training for members of College committees on the application of PSED.	

Extend Support for Mature Students		
<i>Explore further opportunities to extend the educational provision to mature students.</i>		
Specific Objective	Progress June 2026	
Establish a mid-late-career programme, as a component of innovating and diversifying our approach to mature education.	The Oxford Next Horizon is not running in 2026. Different options/programmes are being considered at present aligned with this objective.	
Establish a standing Admissions and Outreach Group to monitor mature application trends both in Oxford and more widely, and to maintain ongoing review of outreach strategies aimed at institutions and networks.	The outreach group continues to meet regularly. We are continuing to develop our outreach strategy and exploring widening our social media reach, our range of initiatives, and new target audiences.	
Establish specific resources aimed at supporting the specific needs of mature students.	The resources on our website are aimed at supporting a mature student community. Fundraising is required to increase accommodation and scholarships. We continue to review our resources and support mature students going forward.	

Promoting Inclusive Communications		
<i>In developing our communications activities, seek to engage our current students and alumni in the process, and promote best practice on making electronic communications accessible to people with disabilities.</i>		
Specific Objective	Progress June 2026	
Continue the accessibility review of the College's external website.	The Head of Communications is working with the University's Accessibility Lead who has confirmed that an accessibility review of the College's external website is being carried out in the next 12 months.	