

Equal Opportunities Policy

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY STATEMENT

Lady Margaret Hall was founded in 1878. It was because of the very success of the gender revolution, which LMH helped pioneer, that in 1978, one hundred years after its foundation, it decided it would serve the cause of equality better by no longer limiting its exceptional educational resources to women. This was an example of the College's characteristic ability to respond to the particular needs and new opportunities of contemporary society and the College has a continuing commitment to inclusiveness, no matter what a person's age, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, disability, or position with respect to gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity. We aim to ensure that we not only observe the relevant legislation but also do whatever is necessary to provide genuine equality of opportunity. We are committed to a programme of action to make this Policy fully effective. The College welcomes diversity amongst its fellows, students, employees, members and visitors, recognising the particular contributions to the achievement of its educational purposes that can be made by individuals from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences.

THE COMMITMENT - EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICIES

Whether we are employees or students, we all have a role to play in promoting diversity and making LMH a place where:

- people's differences are respected and catered for; and
- they have equal chances of receiving the provisions they need.

This document sets out in appendices a range of detailed policies relating to the six equality strands of sex, race, disability, age, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

We are required to have these policies by law. However, we think it is important to have them for other reasons; everyone should have access to services they need.

Our policies are underpinned by legislation for the six main strands of equality legislation, namely: sex, race, disability, age, religion or belief and sexual orientation. The relevant legislation is:

- Equal Pay Act (1970)
- The Equality Act 2010

A principal aim of this College's Equal Opportunities Policy is to ensure that in the recruitment, selection, education and assessment of students, and in the recruitment, selection, training, appraisal, development and promotion of employees, the only consideration must be that the individual best meets, or is likely to meet, the requirements of the programme or course or post.

Lady Margaret Hall is committed to provide a learning, working and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all its members are respected, and which is free from prejudice, intimidation and all forms of harassment, including bullying. We seek to ensure that no-one suffers, either directly or indirectly, as a result of discrimination.

In order to realise these commitments, the College will:

- promote the aims of this Policy;
- be proactive in eliminating discrimination, including harassment and bullying, through training and publication of detailed guidance, available to all employees and students;
- have regard to its obligations under relevant legislation and for its policies and guidance to mirror the same and be changed to meet the demands of new legislation; and
- regularly review the terms of this Policy and all associated codes of practice and guidance.

Student Body

In relation to students, the College aims to provide education of excellent quality for all its 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 recruitment and admissions, to the curriculum, teaching and assessment, to welfare and support services, as far as the College takes the lead in these matters, and when it does not it will act in its support capacity to its best endeavour.

Employment, Recruitment and Selection

We aim, through appropriate training and supervision, to ensure that all employees who are responsible for recruitment and selection are familiar with this Policy and apply it in conjunction with our recruitment policy.

Selection criteria (job description and person specification) will be kept under constant review to ensure that they are justifiable on non-discriminatory grounds as being essential for the effective performance of the job. Selection will be conducted on an objective basis and will focus only on the applicants' suitability for the job and their ability to fulfil the job requirements. Our interest is in the skills, abilities, qualifications, aptitude and the potential of individuals to do their jobs.

Reasons for the selection and rejection of applicants for vacancies are recorded.

Vacancy Advertising

Wherever possible, vacancies will be notified to job centres, careers offices and local media etc but will always be advertised at least internally. All advertisements will state 'Lady Margaret Hall is an equal opportunities employer'.

Personnel Records

In order to ensure the effective operation of the Equal Opportunities Policy (and for no other purpose) a record is kept of job applicants' sex, race and disability (for those applicants who complete and return our monitoring form).

Training and Development

All non-academic employees are encouraged to discuss their career prospects and training needs with their manager at least annually. Opportunities for promotion and training are communicated and made available to all employees on a fair and equal basis.

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.

Terms and Conditions of Employment

We will ensure that all of our employment policies, including compensation and benefits, and any other relevant procedures associated with terms and conditions of employment, are formulated and applied without regard to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation or any other characteristic unrelated to the performance of the job. These will be reviewed regularly to ensure there is no discrimination. Length of service as a qualifying criterion for benefits will not exceed five years, unless clearly justifiable.

Communication of this Policy

All employees and students will be made aware of this Policy and a copy of the Policy will be included in the Employee Handbook, Student Handbook and on the College website and given to all students and employees on joining us.

Implementation, Monitoring and Review

This policy is effective from 17 June 2010, and, as updated, from 31 January 2012.

The Personnel Officer has overall responsibility for implementing and monitoring this Policy, which will be reviewed on a regular basis and may be changed from time to time.

Any queries or comments about this Policy should be addressed to the Personnel Officer, for non-academic employees, and to the Senior Tutor, for academic employees and students.

RESPONSIBILITY

Governing Body and its Committees

The overall responsibility for implementing and monitoring the effectiveness of this policy rests with the senior management and Fellows of Lady Margaret Hall.

Governing Body will apply the College's commitment to equal opportunities when deciding who serves on College committees.

Personnel Officer

The Personnel Officer is responsible for the day-to-day operation and monitoring of the College's Equal Opportunities Policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework. The Personnel Officer reports to the Treasurer and Governing Body and reports job application monitoring statistics annually to the Equality Committee.

Similarly, the Senior Tutor is responsible for the day-to-day operation and application of the College's Equal Opportunities Policy for LMH students and academic staff. The Senior Tutor reports annually to the Academic Policy Committee and Governing Body concerning student admissions and progress.

Departments

Departmental managers within the College are also responsible for the day-to-day implementation and delivery of this Policy. The College will provide relevant training for all employees on their responsibilities and duties under this Policy.

All employees and students

We expect everyone who works and studies with us to be treated, and to treat others, with respect. All members of the College have an individual responsibility to ensure that they comply with this Policy.

Monitoring

In the event that the outcome of monitoring discloses potentially adverse impact on a group or groups, the Equality Committee will bring this to the attention of the next scheduled Finance Committee and/or Academic Policy Committee for consideration and action including further research, where appropriate. One of the improvements arising from this process was:

- A disability buildings access audit identified the constraints and possibilities for improving access to College buildings for disabled College users.

COMPLAINTS

Lady Margaret Hall takes seriously any breach of this Policy. The College encourages any current student or employee who has a complaint concerning a breach or potential breach of this Policy to bring such a complaint to the College using the staff grievance procedure outlined in the Employee Handbook, the student complaints procedure outlined in the Student Handbook and Regulations, or where appropriate, the College Code of Practice on Harassment.

College members or employees who believe they are subjected to discrimination should be able to seek advice and support in confidence. The Personnel Officer or Staff Harassment Officers are available for employees for these purposes. College members may refer to the Senior Tutor or Academic Harassment Officers.

Allegations regarding a potential breach of this Policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with detailed procedures. Individuals who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. False allegations of a breach in this Policy which are found to have been made in bad faith will, however, be dealt with under the appropriate disciplinary procedures.

All individuals will be personally accountable for their behaviour, actions and/or lack of actions, in cases of complaint or harassment.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Full details of LMH's Equal Opportunities Policy, with appendices covering: age, disability, sex, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation, are available on the College Intranet site (<https://intranet.lmh.ox.ac.uk>) for employees and students.

These policies need to be updated regularly. You can help by telling us what new things we may need to include and how they can be improved. We are always interested in good practice. If you can help us, please let us know.

If you would like this document in other formats such as large print, audio CD or in another language, please contact marie.ruffle@lmh.ox.ac.uk

June 2010 and updated January 2012