



Oriel College

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY POLICY

Version: v.2

Approved by the Equality and Diversity Committee: 22 May 2025

Approved by Governing Body: 18 June 2025

Next review date: Trinity Term 2026

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A. Introduction

Oriel College is committed to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion, encouraging all our staff and students to fulfil their potential. This approach forms a vital part of all our policies, procedures, practices, and plans.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the College's **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy** which outlines the College's general approach. The aim of this policy is to provide further detail on the specific ways in which the College are endeavouring to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty.

What is the Public Sector Equality Duty?

The Equality Act 2010 introduced the concept of the Public Sector Equality Duty, which came into force in April 2011. The equality duty covers all the protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act, with the exception of marriage and civil partnership:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

The College, as a public institution, must hold due regard for the equality duty. Information on the College's adherence to the duty can be found in **E: Policy Statement** and **G: Procedure**.

B. Scope

The Public Sector Equality Duty Policy applies to all members of the College community, which includes academic and non-academic staff, students, agency workers, temporary workers, and contractors.

C. Information Security Classification

This policy represents an important part of the College's commitment to promote equality, diversity, and inclusion and sets out its intentions to fulfil its duties under the Equality Act 2010. As such, it will be available on the College website.

The policy will also be available through the internal policy SharePoint, and from the Governance Officer (governance@oriel.ox.ac.uk).

D. Delegated Authority

Governing Body have delegated responsibility to the Equality and Diversity Committee for the management of this policy.

The Senior Tutor and Head of HR are responsible for ensuring that College practice accurately reflects the stipulations set out in this policy, and for ensuring that the policy is brought for at least an annual review to the Equality and Diversity Committee.

The policy will be submitted to Governing Body for approval in Trinity Term of each academic year.

E. Policy Statement

The general Public Sector Equality Duty requires the College to have due regard to the need to:

1. Eliminate discrimination, victimisation, and harassment and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people from different protected groups. This includes:
 - Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
 - Meeting the needs of people with protected characteristics.
 - Encouraging people with protected characteristics to participate in areas where their representation is disproportionately low.
3. To foster good relations between people from different protected groups, including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

Oriel College's primary purpose is to educate our students, and to support the research of our academic staff. These functions are assisted by a body of administrative and support staff with a wide range of roles. The College embeds due regard for equality, diversity and inclusion into all policies, procedures, practices, and plans contributing to its primary purpose.

Since we exist within the wider Oxford University framework, in matters of Equal Opportunities the College endeavours to follow the policies of the Collegiate University (<https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/equality-policy>).

F. Definition of Terms

"Due Regard"

The College has "due regard" to the aims and principles of the Public Sector Equality Duty.

This means that it consciously considers the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty as outlined in **D: Delegated Authority** as part of its decision making processes and when reviewing or developing policies.

"Advancing Equality"

Due regard for "advancing equality" means 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, and encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

"Fostering Good Relations"

"Fostering good relations" involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups. The legislation allows for the more favourable treatment of some people ("positive action"), but only where

the more favourable treatment can be objectively justified as a proportionate means of fulfilling the public sector equality duty.

G. Procedure

This section illustrates how the College fulfils its obligations to have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty, and how it intends to advance equality and foster good relations between people from different groups.

Identifying and Monitoring Equality Issues

The College currently has mechanisms and procedures in place in order to identify and monitor equality issues relating to students and staff at the point of selection, recruitment, and for the duration of education and employment.

We currently set standards and develop policies addressing protected characteristics, which are reviewed regularly and designed not to be discriminatory. College policies are available on the College website or on request from the Governance Officer (governance@oriel.ox.ac.uk).

The College also:

- Produces statistical data on Undergraduate admissions, undergraduate examination results, non-academic staff at the point of recruitment, and non-academic staff in employment.
- Uses the above statistical data to inform our decision-making and reviews, as measured in relation to College policies and relevant Government legislation.
- Commissions audits (such as on physical access to College buildings).
- Has specific individuals as points of contact and conduits for identifying issues that may arise.

The Equality and Diversity Committee of the College, which has representation from all members of the College including students, academic, and non-academic staff, is the designated place where equality issues can be raised, discussed and addressed.

Steps Taken to have Due Regard

Steps taken to have due regard are outlined below in relation to our members (students, academic staff, and non-academic staff).

Students

Student Recruitment and Admissions

Oriel College is committed to the admission of students on the basis of strictly academic criteria, regardless of national, social, or any other characteristics. At the stage of shortlisting undergraduate applicants for interview, the College participates in the Common Framework for Colleges and Faculties (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/applying-to-oxford/decisions/common-framework>) and is fully committed to the Code of Practice for Undergraduate Admissions to the Oxford Colleges.

The College is actively involved, through our access and outreach initiatives in reaching out to encourage applications from students from groups that are currently under-represented at Oxford University.

At interviews, we make every reasonable effort to meet the needs of applicants with disabilities, encouraging all candidates to tell us if they have a disability beforehand in order that suitable arrangements can be made.

The College undertakes to train all those involved in undergraduate and graduate admissions on the implications of equality in selection of students. The Education Committee and the Equality and Diversity Committee monitors the College's undergraduate and graduate admissions processes annually.

Conduct and Discipline

We set clear standards of accepted behaviour through our **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy** and **Bullying and Harassment policy**, and the College regulations.

Any unlawful discriminatory behaviour, including harassment or bullying by individuals or groups, is unacceptable and is regarded extremely seriously. It can form grounds for disciplinary action, which may include expulsion.

Student Support and Welfare

Student well-being is central to the College's values. We have an extensive welfare support network for students from academic and non-academic staff, as well as within the student body. College Tutors (for undergraduates) and College Advisors (for graduates) provide support in relation to academic work.

A dedicated Welfare Team is here to deal with day-to-day practical issues. Junior Deans live on College site and spend a significant portion of their time assisting students with pastoral concerns. The team undertake regular training and are especially sensitive to matters relation to protected characteristics.

In the student body, the Junior Common Room (JCR) Committee has designated Men and Women's reps and a Female Welfare Officer, and the Middle Common Room (MCR) Committee has a designated Welfare Officer.

Awareness Raising, and Fostering Good Relations

The College strives to foster good relationships between people from different groups. The Welfare Team work to make Oriel College an open and inclusive environment, and to raise the profile of matters relating to protected characteristics within our community.

The Junior Deans, together with the relevant JCR and MCR Officers work to be inclusive of all, and encourage communities to take part in all aspects of College life, alongside organising specific events related to protected characteristics.

The MCR and JCR Officers bring protected characteristics matters to their respective Committees, which in turn represent the student community in all College Committees relating to student welfare.

Staff

Recruitment

It is the policy of the College that, subject to statutory provisions, no applicant or member of staff will be treated less favourably than another because of his or her age, sex, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, racial group, ethnicity,

religion or belief, or disability. In all cases, appointment is determined by the selection criteria for the job.

The College invites all candidates for all appointments to complete an equal opportunities monitoring form, and the results are analysed and monitored. All selection committees aim to have at least one member of each sex (whenever possible).

Non-academic posts are advertised on various online forums as well as internally and we ensure that we advertise in local papers and at the Job Centre in order to try and reach the majority of the local population and to maximise diversity of applicants. This list of advertisements is not exhaustive, and advertising strategies may vary by role.

Conduct and Discipline

We set clear standards of accepted behaviour through our **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy** and **Bullying and Harassment policy**.

Any unlawful discriminatory behaviour, including harassment, victimisation, or bullying by individuals or groups, is unacceptable, and is regarded extremely seriously. It can form grounds for disciplinary action, which may include dismissal.

For non-academic posts, the Employee handbook contains the major terms and conditions for staff. These are reviewed annually (and amended as necessary) to ensure that they take into account any changes in legislation.

Training and Awareness Raising, Fostering Good relations

Members of academic staff are regularly informed about relevant courses run by the University. College tutors are expected to take specific courses relevant to their roles (e.g. a course for undergraduate admissions tutors).

The College monitors or maintains an overview of the following processes:

- Staff selection and progression.
- Staff grievances, harassment, discipline, and access to training.

Members of non-academic staff are expected to complete a mandatory course via iHasco on Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion, and Bullying and Harassment to raise awareness of issues pertaining to protected characteristics and to promote positive working practices and foster good relations.

Support and Welfare

Support for academic staff in College is provided through the Provost and the College Officers. Academic staff with joint University appointments are designated mentors within their University department.

For non-academic staff, the College aims to provide a supportive working environment and is committed to taking specific initiatives for this purpose where appropriate.

More detail regarding initiatives for employee support can be found in the College's **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**.

Public Sector Equality Duty Objectives, 2025-29

As part of the duty, the College's Governing Body approve and monitor equality objectives at least every four years. These objectives provide the College with a specific focus to further embed equality, diversity and inclusion into the College's policies, procedures, practices, and plans.

The most recent objectives were approved by the Governing Body on 12th March 2025 and are:

1. To ensure that the College's policies, procedures, practice and support concerning harassment, discrimination and bullying are effective and understood by the whole College community.
2. To conduct a review of employee diversity.
3. To foster an inclusive culture within the College at all levels.

As part of the duty, the College will publish annual updates on the progress of meeting these objectives.

H. Training and Responsibilities

Training

The College undertakes to train all those involved in undergraduate and graduate admissions on the implications of equality in selection of students.

All Staff undertake online training courses on equality and diversity in the workplace through the accredited provider IHASCO, as part of their induction upon gaining employment.

Students are given talks on promoting diversity and inclusion as part of the "Fresher's Week" itinerary.

The College ensures that all training opportunities are provided equally.

I. Internal Help and Raising Concerns

Students who feel that they have not been treated in line with the commitment set out in this policy should raise their concerns with the Senior Dean.

Members of staff who feel that they have not been treated in line with the commitment set out in this policy should raise their concerns with the Head of HR.

Fuller details of processes students and staff members can use to report potential cases of discrimination are set out in the **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**. Procedures to report harassment can be found in the **Bullying and Harassment Policy**.

J. Consequences of Non-Observance

The College handles cases of bullying, harassment, and discrimination extremely seriously, and proportionate measures will be taken, including potential dismissal or expulsion from the College.

See the **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy** and the **Bullying and Harassment Policy** for fuller details of action the College make take to investigate cases of harassment or discrimination.

K. Further Help

Students should direct questions to the officers with welfare responsibilities as set out in **G: Procedure** of this policy.

Staff members should refer questions to the Head of HR.

L. Reference

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- **Bullying and Harassment Policy**
- **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**

M. Policy Version Control Table

Version	Owner	Agreed by Equality and Diversity Committee	Agreed by Governing Body	Reason for amendment	Amended by	Next review	Further notes
v.1	Head of HR	31 May 2024	12 June 2024	This is the original version.	Governance Officer	Trinity Term 2025	Decision for House Committee to review before review at Equality and Diversity Committee
v.2	Senior Tutor and Head of HR	22 May 2025	18 June 2025	Annual review.	Head of HR and Governance Officer	Trinity Term 2026	