



**HARPER ADAMS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE**

**DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME  
2009-2012**

**November 2009**

## **HARPER ADAMS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE**

### **Disability Equality Scheme**

#### **Introduction**

1. The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005 and the Disability Equality Duty places a duty on public bodies to promote disability equality. The legislation makes it unlawful to discriminate against disabled people in terms of access to employment and the services provided by the College, including the provision of higher education. The purpose of this document is to outline the College's response to the legislation by way of a Disability Equality Scheme (DES).
2. Each public body was expected to publish its scheme by December 2006, report annually against the original DES action plan, and to publish a revised DES by December 2009. In each instance, there are particular expectations placed upon such bodies about the contents of the document and the consultation process required during its development.
3. The College already has policies in place covering Disabilities and Employment, Learning, Teaching and Assessment, Access to College Facilities and The Public. These form part of the College's Equality and Diversity Code of Practice. Each policy document has undergone an equal opportunities assessment. These policies should be read in conjunction with the Disability Equality Scheme.

#### **What the scheme means for you**

4. Members of the College, and others who think they may be affected by the College's operation of this scheme, are encouraged to read the entire document but may wish to refer to the specific guidance at Paragraphs 25-39, which begins on Page 5.

#### **The aim of the scheme**

5. The College wishes to promote an inclusive institutional culture that recognises the benefits of a diverse learning community for students, staff and the development of the institution. It is the College's aim that potential and current students and staff are treated fairly on the basis of merit regardless of any disability they may have. The College will, to this end:
  - Provide services in support of this Scheme and the Equality and Diversity Code of Practice to students and staff
  - Challenge discrimination against disabled people
  - Promote inclusion of disabled people in College activities and through the College's policies
  - Develop, monitor and review an action plan to help the College reflect diversity in its workforce and student population
6. By adopting the above approaches it is envisaged that the College will ensure that its commitment to disabled people is clear both to existing students and staff, and to those who may wish to join the College community at some point in the future.

#### **Involving disabled people in the development of this scheme**

7. The College established a Working Group to develop the original scheme and also established a Group to review the original scheme and proposed revisions including an updated action plan for the period 2009-2012. Members of the staff and student communities who considered themselves as having a disability were invited to take part in focus groups during the review process so that they might contribute to the revised Scheme and action plan. In all instances contributors were reminded of the College's Equality and Diversity Code of Practice.

## **The legislative background**

8. The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA 2005) has developed previous legislation by placing a positive duty on all public bodies, including those in higher education, to eliminate discrimination and harassment and to promote equality of opportunity for people with disabilities. This is similar to the positive duty to promote race equality already introduced under the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000. The DDA 2005 requires each public body to adopt a proactive approach to promoting the full participation of people with disabilities in all activities, including the publication of a Scheme that will set out the way in which the institution intends to address the requirements of the Act and to review and revised the Scheme every three years.
9. In common with other institutions in the sector, this Scheme is informed by the social model of disability, which maintains that the 'barriers' or elements of social organisation that exclude people who have impairments should be identified and removed. Examples of such barriers include:
  - Prejudice and stereotypes
  - Inflexible organisational procedures and practices
  - Access to information
  - Access to buildings
  - Accessible transport facilities
10. It is incumbent on the College, and policy makers within the institution, to find ways to reorganise activities and facilities to address barriers such as those described above and to promote a more inclusive culture within the organisation.

## **What other factors should be taken into account?**

11. When dealing with disabilities the following points should be taken into account:
  - Disability is dynamic and not static
  - Disability is relative to the environment and often requires the introduction of different practices or processes (reasonable adjustments) to enable the full participation of disabled people
  - Disability monitoring raises privacy issues as a significant number of impairments are not visible
  - People can become disabled at any time;
  - We should not make assumptions about what people can do, based on their disability
12. These are important issues because one of the major issues that the College will need to address is to generate an inclusive attitude and approach to disability equality, through its training programmes and the approach taken by students and staff towards disabled people. Our use of language is therefore a primary consideration and one that training programmes will seek to address.

## **Publication of the scheme and awareness raising**

13. The Scheme will be incorporated in:
  - Staff handbooks - for all College staff
  - Student handbooks - for all College students
  - The College's web site - for enquiries made to the College
  - The College intranet site - for reference by staff and students
14. The College will continue to arrange for Disability Equality and Diversity to be included in Freshers' talks given to students at the start of the academic year. The College will also continue its training programme to support staff and students in general awareness raising about the Act and its implications for the work of the College including in particular the integration of the Marshall-ACM software into all programmes taken by first year students. The software is also recommended to all new staff as part of their induction and they are encouraged to engage with it during their first few weeks at the College.

15. The outcomes and assessment of progress against the objectives of the Scheme, and associated disability monitoring reports and any alterations to the Act that might lead to a substantial change to the College's Scheme, will continue to be published annually in internal documents for circulation to, and access by College staff and students, and on the College's web site for external audiences.

### **Responsibilities for implementing and monitoring the scheme**

16. The ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the duties set out in the Act are met lies with the College's Board of Governors. The Board will also be responsible for ensuring that adequate resources are provided to enable the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this Scheme. A progress report on the implementation action plan for the period 2006-2009 is at Annex 1 and a revised action plan for the period 2009-2012 is at Annex 2. The Board will receive an annual report in the form of an impact assessment of progress with the Scheme, compiled by the University College Secretary, who will co-ordinate input from the Personnel Officer with particular responsibility for Equality and Diversity, Learner Support Co-ordinator, Student Services Manager, Academic Registrar and President of the Students' Union as appropriate.
17. The Governors Staffing Committee will continue to monitor, on behalf of the Board, the implementation of this Scheme as it relates to College staff. It will receive reports of issues of concern to disabled staff and the way in which they have been managed and resolved. The Governors Staffing Committee will also receive annual reports of disability monitoring (of applications for and appointment to posts compared with the analysis of the local labour market) to inform planning and decision making in relation to the Scheme. Data produced by the Equality Challenge Unit will be used to enable benchmarking of the College's staffing policy measures.
18. A similar report on the admission and progress of students (using HESA definitions of disability) will be presented annually by the Academic Registrar to the Academic Board to measure the effect of the open access approach that the College wishes to promote to applicants and students.
19. Consultation on the Scheme and its development and issues relating to the use or interpretation and progress of this policy will be considered by the Staff Consultative Group and the College/UCU Joint Negotiating Committee (for staff) and meetings held by the Principal with the Students' Union Executive and senior staff, which occur at regular intervals throughout the academic year (for students). Academic Board will also be asked to consider annual reports in relation to students with disabilities and the progress made to meet the DES action plan 2009-2012. External consultation will be undertaken with relevant local groups as these are identified and relationships with them are developed.

### **Evidence required for monitoring the scheme**

20. Our annual reports are expected to include (but not be limited to) the following:
  - A progress report on mainstreaming disability equality and diversity in strategy and policy development by way of a report on progress against key outcome measures in the Action Plan that forms part of this Scheme
  - Developments in governance and management of the Scheme
  - A general section on 'Improving Disability Diversity' which will cover aspects of:
    - Students/Staff**
    - Admissions (based on recruitment)/ Recruitment and selection
    - Progression and level of achievement/ Promotion
    - Curriculum development /Training and development
    - Use and access to student support systems/ Use and access to staff support systems
    - Disciplinary matters/ Disciplinary matters
    - Student complaints and their resolution/Grievances and their resolution
21. Monitoring is not intended to be an end in itself, but to produce information to be used in planning and decision-making in support of the implementation of this Scheme, and to assess the impact of the scheme on the recruitment, development and retention of disabled students and staff.

Quantitative data will be supplemented by qualitative information gathered from student and staff surveys. Feedback on development of the Scheme will be provided to staff and students.

### **Impact assessments**

22. When developing policies or introducing new systems or other projects (such as building schemes) the College will consider these developments as they are formulated to mitigate any adverse impact on the College's aim for disability equality. The scale of the policy or project will be taken into account in each case, but it will be recognised that even small policy or project developments can have large impacts upon disabled people.
23. The duties specified in the regulations allow for public bodies not to implement certain aspects of their Schemes in cases where there are unforeseen difficulties that would make implementation unreasonable or where costs escalate to a scale that is out of proportion to the duty such that it is not practicable to implement the action. Policy and project developments should seek to avoid each circumstance, but it should be recognised that these circumstances may arise during the implementation of the Scheme and its associated Action Plan. In such cases, alternative courses of action will be considered to achieve the stated objective.
24. Particular areas where the College will monitor its practices and, where necessary, make reasonable adjustments, will include:
  - Partnership arrangements, where the College will make clear to partner organisations its duties under the Regulations
  - Procurement, where the College will be expected to ensure that the procurement process takes account of the requirements of this Scheme and the Regulations, and that contractors/suppliers understand and comply with the requirements of the duties required of the College
  - Buildings, where access to College buildings and the built environment will need to take account of the varying needs of disabled people
  - Communications, including the way that the College communicates to students and staff (in all forms including electronic media) and how it ensures that such communications are provided in accessible formats
  - IT and other technologies, to ensure that they take specific account of the needs of disabled learners and staff
  - Learner Support Services, to ensure that they take specific account of the needs of disabled learners and staff
  - Managers and supervisors, will be expected to be familiar with the provisions of the Scheme and its implications for the areas that they manage or supervise

### **To whom does this scheme apply?**

25. An individual is covered by the DDA if, in short, they currently have, or have had in the past, a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term (i.e. over one year) adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. The DDA makes it unlawful to treat a disabled person less favourably than other people for a reason related to their disability, unless the treatment can be justified. Particular duties under the Act are that:
  - Criteria, provisions and practices that make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to access services must be changed
  - Extra help, aids and services and reasonable adjustments should be made available if these would enable or make it easier for disabled people to use services
  - Where physical barriers make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for a disabled person to access services, the services should be provided in an alternative way where it is reasonable to do so
26. It is unlawful for an employer to discriminate against a disabled person in their recruitment and selection arrangements, on the terms under which they are offered employment, or by refusing to offer or deliberately not offering employment.

## **Reasonable adjustments**

27. If a physical feature (e.g. buildings, furniture, or fittings) or practices (for recruitment, selection or promotion, for example) cause a substantial disadvantage to a disabled person (compared to a non-disabled person) the University College as an employer and as a public body offering education for students and services for other stakeholders has a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments. This means that the employer must take reasonable steps to prevent that disadvantage.
28. Examples of reasonable adjustments for staff/students/other stakeholders include:
- Making adjustments to premises
  - Allocating some of a disabled member of staff's duties to another person
  - Transferring a staff member to fill another vacancy
  - Altering the a staff member's hours of work or training
  - Assigning a staff member to a different place of work or training
  - Allowing a staff member or student to be absent during working or training hours for rehabilitation, assessment or treatment
  - Giving, or arranging for, training or mentoring (whether for the disabled person or any other person)
  - Acquiring or modifying equipment
  - Modifying instructions or reference manuals
  - Modifying procedures for testing or assessment
  - Providing a reader or interpreter (amanuensis)
  - Providing supervision or other support

## **What is reasonable?**

29. An adjustment is likely to be regarded as reasonable when judged against the following criteria:
- The effectiveness of the step in preventing the disadvantage
  - The financial and other costs of the adjustment and the extent of any disruption caused
  - The extent of the employer's financial or other resources
  - The availability to the employer of financial or other assistance to help make an adjustment (eg Access to Work funding)
  - The nature of the institution's activities, and the size of its undertaking

## **What are the responsibilities of members of the College community?**

30. We expect students and staff to be aware of this Scheme and to put it into practice. The Scheme is widely available in College publications and on the College internet and intranet sites, and can be obtained from the Personnel Office and the Students Union.
31. The College has already made available training programmes for staff that cover equality and diversity issues. Staff are actively encouraged to access or request further training on specific disability equality and diversity issues via the Marshall-ACM self-learning software adopted for this purpose or via the Staff Development Officer. The Marshall ACM self-learning software is also available for student use.
32. Staff are reminded of the duty to ensure that services, information, facilities and communications are accessible to disabled colleagues and members of the public. This includes those placed on the College internet or intranet services.
33. Staff and students should bring to the attention of their Line Manager or the Student Services Manager, any issue that they think might affect disabled people so that consideration may be given as to how it might be addressed.

## **Disclosure of disabilities**

34. It follows from the above that those people with disabilities must feel that the environment in which they work or study is accepting of their circumstances and can be sufficiently trusted so that they might disclose their disability. We encourage all staff and students with disabilities to disclose this information to the relevant College department (Personnel Office for staff and Registry/Learner Support for students) so that our arrangements can take account of their specific needs, and any barriers that remain to be addressed in the College's aim to achieve equality for disabled staff and students. The College has also developed a policy for supporting students with disabilities while they are undertaking a work placement.

## **Making this scheme accessible**

35. Information about our Disability Equality Scheme can be made available in other languages and formats upon request, such as large print, Braille, audio cassette, memory stick and CD Rom. If you would like to receive information in a different language or another format, then please contact us on telephone number 01952 820280 or by e-mail (for staff) to [ngh@harper-adams.ac.uk](mailto:ngh@harper-adams.ac.uk) or (for students) to [jhill@harper-adams.ac.uk](mailto:jhill@harper-adams.ac.uk).

## **Making a complaint**

36. Complaints by students arising out of the provisions of the scheme should be addressed, in the first instance, to the Student Services Manager and thereafter to the Academic Registrar. Complaints will be dealt with in accordance with the College's regulations for Student Complaints.
37. Complaints by staff arising out of the provisions of the Scheme should be addressed, in the first instance, to the appropriate Line Manager. If the Line Manager is involved in the complaint then the complainant should register their complaint with the Personnel Office. Thereafter the complaint will be dealt with in accordance with the College's established grievance procedure.

## **Further information**

38. Further information for staff or prospective staff about the College's approach to disability equality can be obtained from the College's Personnel Office, the contact details for which are provided at paragraph 35.
39. Further information about the specific provisions for disabled students, which may also be of assistance to staff, can be obtained from the College's Learner Support Service (contact [jhill@harper-adams.ac.uk](mailto:jhill@harper-adams.ac.uk) or call 01952 815417). The Learner Support Service has a range of information, which should be read in conjunction with this Scheme, including:
- The College's Policy on Admissions
  - Learning, Teaching and Assessment Policies for students with disabilities and Guidance for Staff, Students and Applicants
  - Undergraduate Work Placement for Disabled Students
  - Learner Support
  - Web Accessibility
  - E-Learning Accessibility
  - Careers Information for Students with Disabilities
  - The Production of Accessible Materials
  - The College's Mental Health Policy

Disability Equality Scheme (DES) Action Plan 2009-2012 Area	Action	Target Date/Measures of Success	Action by
Training & Development	<p>Continue equality and diversity training programme with updating events for staff and managers and report every six months on take up and actions undertaken to encourage further engagement where need is identified.</p> <p>Provide a specific session at least annually tailored for the development needs of managers who are managing staff with disabilities</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p><i>All Managers to have attended a training session by 2012</i></p> <p><i>All relevant managers to have attended this session</i></p>	Staff Development Officer
Training & Development	<p>Include Equality and Diversity training and development—as a standing item on the Staff Consultative Group agendas</p> <p>Identify with SU President whether an SU Officer can be asked to hold as part of their portfolio a role as an independent contact point for student feedback in addition to the consideration of putting in place other opportunities for encouraging feedback from students with disabilities</p>	<p>2009/10</p> <p><i>Inclusion of item on SCG agenda to encourage regular dialogue and improve awareness</i></p> <p><i>Advise all students of the independent contact point</i></p>	<p>Staff Development Officer /HR Officer</p> <p>Learner Support Co- Ordinator</p>
Training & Development	<p>Invite all new and current staff who have declared a disability to meet with the HR Officer to discuss any specific needs. As part of this meeting establish whether the staff member wishes his/her manager to be informed of such needs, whether they would wish to have a nominated supporter, and agree in writing the details of how and when the agreed information is to be provided</p>	<p>2009/10</p> <p><i>All such meetings to be completed</i></p>	HR Officer

<b>Disability Equality Scheme (DES) Action Plan 2009-2012 Area</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Target Date/Measures of Success</b>	<b>Action by</b>
Buildings	Continue programme of disabled access improvements using funds allocated in the capital development programme  Include a review of the number and location of parking bays designated for staff with disabilities and a review of accessible signage	2009-2012 <i>Achieve goals identified in the Estates Strategy</i>  <i>Complete the review and feedback to all staff</i>	Estates and Facilities Manager
Buildings	Consult disabled staff and students about particular building access needs and priorities as individual needs arise	2009-2012 <i>Sessions held</i>	Estates and Facilities Manager working with Head of Learning Support/HR Officer with responsibility for Equality and Diversity
Buildings	Arrange a SKILL audit at a date to be agreed with Finance and General Purposes Committee	2010 onwards as current capital programme is completed <i>Audit completed</i>	Estates and Facilities Manager/Learner Support Co-ordinator
Procurement	Review at least annually procurement systems to ensure that they meet the requirements of the DES and engage with NWUPC and other consortia as appropriate to gain further information on best practice	2009-2012  <i>Audits completed</i>	Office Services Manager/Estates and Facilities Manager
Procurement	Ensure that estates procurement systems take account of the requirements of the DES	2000-2012 <i>Procurement systems meet DES</i>	Estates and Facilities Manager
Communications	Consult disabled staff and students on appropriate methods to ensure on-going effective communication within the College	2010 <i>Consultation and feedback completed together with implementation of actions</i>	Director of Communications
IT Systems	Review e-learning portal to ensure that it remains accessible to disabled students and staff	2009-2012 <i>Review completed</i>	Director of Finance/Head of IS/IT
IT Systems	Ensure that any newly purchased major College systems (finance, students, contacts etc) meets industry accessibility standards	2009-2012 <i>Comply with accessibility best practice</i>	Director of Finance/Head of IS/IT

Disability Equality Scheme (DES) Action Plan 2009-2012 Area	Action	Target Date/Measures of Success	Action by
Learner Support	<p>Maintain proactive approach to learner support,(including briefing tutors on the provision of lecture notes in an accessible format) through established systems and develop and put in place new systems for gathering student feedback if required following review of consultation approaches already in place with student community</p> <p>Review the effectiveness of the current use of the Marshall ACM Software</p> <p>Review the document “Learning, Teaching and Assessment Policies for students with disabilities and guidance for staff, students and applicants” to ensure that it fully embraces the needs of PGT and PGR students</p>	<p>2009-2012</p> <p><i>Systems reviewed and actions taken where needed</i></p>	<p>Academic Registrar. HEDQE and Learner Support Co-ordinator</p> <p>Academic Registrar. HEDQE and Learner Support Co-ordinator</p> <p>Academic Registrar with HEDQE and Learner Support Co-ordinator</p>
Learner Support	<p>Publicise learner support services widely within the College and in student recruitment literature including further information on the relevant web pages</p> <p>Ensure that Employers, Applicants, FE Colleges and Schools are aware of the facilities and support available for students with disabilities</p>	<p>2009-2012</p> <p><i>Improvements to published information</i></p>	<p>Academic Registrar and Learner Support Co-ordinator with Head of Liaison and Marketing</p> <p>Director of Communications</p>
Learner Support	<p>Maintain membership of SKILL</p>	<p>2009-2012</p> <p><i>Membership in place and feeding back to College on best practice</i></p>	<p>Learner Support Co-ordinator</p>
Employment	<p>Aim for recognition under the double tick ‘Positive About Disabled People’ standard by the end of the DES planning period</p>	<p>2010/11</p> <p><i>Achieve double tick</i></p>	<p>Personnel Manager and HR Officer with particular responsibility for Equality and Diversity</p>

<b>Disability Equality Scheme (DES) Action Plan 2009-2012 Area</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Target Date/Measures of Success</b>	<b>Action by</b>
Employment	New HR officer will be undertake a benchmarking exercise with other HEIs and LANDEX members and report to Staffing Committee during 2010 with a view to recommending staff employment targets for 2011 and 2012	2010/11 <i>Complete exercise and recommend employment targets</i>	Personnel Manager & HR Officer
Student Recruitment	Establish targets for student recruitment that reflect the College's national, but rural, student recruitment market	2009-2012 <i>Targets in place</i>	Academic Registrar
Student Recruitment	Review and evaluate with the Counsellor and with inputs from the Student Union the effectiveness of the peer mentoring support system for students with disabilities and report to Academic Board	2011 <i>Evaluation completed</i>	Academic Registrar with Student Services Manager
Partnership Arrangements	Continue to ensure that partner organisations are aware of, and comply with the requirements of the DES	2009-2012 <i>All partners informed annually</i>	Academic Registrar
Implementation and Monitoring of the DES	Establish and maintain meetings of the DES Group at least twice a year to ensure that annual reports are drafted and evaluated	2009-2012 <i>Meetings in place</i>	University College Secretary
Implementation and Monitoring of the DES	Produce annual statistics on a range of College activities (outlined in the DES) to demonstrate the College's performance in relation to the DES. Newly appointed HR officer will work with Learning Support Co Ordinator on this from March 2010 onwards with a view to developing a more user friendly and accessible reporting tool for student and staff data.	2009-2012 <i>Statistics presented</i>	Academic Registrar, Personnel Manager, HR Officer, Learner Support Co-ordinator
Implementation and Monitoring of the DES	Ensure that staff and student surveys include a specific opportunity to feedback on areas where staff feel the College could better support those with disabilities	2009-2012 <i>Surveys updated</i>	Academic Registrar, Personnel Manager Learner Support Co-ordinator
Implementation and Monitoring of the DES	Produce an annual report on College activities in relation to the DES that will be considered by the Academic Board and Staffing Committee	2009-2012 <i>Annual reports in place</i>	Academic Registrar and Personnel Manager