



Name of Policy: **Public Sector Equality Duty**

RESPONSIBLE COMMITTEE: Equality Committee

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: Fellow for Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

LINKED DOCUMENTS: College: Equality Policy, Harassment policy, Code of Conduct policy.

LINKED DOCUMENTS: Other: n/a

Annual Review date: First meeting of Hilary Term

PURPOSE OF POLICY

This Policy is intended to act, and should be read in conjunction with, the College's Equality Policy.

St John's College is committed to providing an open and safe environment which both values and promotes diversity and equality of opportunity, 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 document provides information about the specific ways in which we are endeavouring to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty.

1. Legal Context

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, and
- sexual orientation.

The general duty requires the College to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, victimisation and harassment and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people from different protected groups, including: 1) Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics; 2) Meeting the needs of people

- with protected characteristics; 3) Encouraging people with protected characteristics to participate in areas where their representation is low.
- Foster good relations between people from different protected groups, including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

The above are also known as the three aims of the general equality duty.

Having 'due regard' means consciously considering the three aims listed above as part of 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; and 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 legislation allows for the more favourable of 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.

2. College Context

St John's 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.

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>

3. How we Identify and Monitor 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 and recruitment of students and staff, and while in education and employment. We currently:

Set standards and develop policies addressing protected characteristics, which are reviewed regularly and designed not to be discriminatory. Our policy documents are published on this website in the <https://www.sjc.ox.ac.uk/policies>

1. Produce statistical data on:

- Undergraduate admissions,
- Undergraduate examination results,
- Professional and academic staff at the point of recruitment,

2. Use the above statistical data to inform our decision-making and reviews, as measured in relation to College policies and relevant Government legislation.
3. Commission audits: e.g. on physical access to College buildings.
4. Have specific individuals as points of contact and conduits for identifying issues that may arise (please see sections 4.1.3., 4.2.4. and 4.3.4. for specific details).

The Equality Committee of the College which has representation from all members of the College (students, academic and professional staff) leads a proactive approach to equal opportunities in the College. This is a free-standing committee which reports directly to the Governing Body. Governing Body and all its main committees consider the duty to promote equality in the development of policies and procedures at all levels.

4. Steps Taken to have Due Regard

Steps taken to have due regard are outlined below in relation to our members: students, academic staff, and professional staff.

4.1 Students

4.1.1. Student Recruitment and Admissions

St John's 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 <http://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 so 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. Admissions Committee, Equality Committee and Educational Policy Committee monitor the College's undergraduate and graduate admissions processes annually.

4.1.2. Conduct and Discipline

We set clear standards of accepted behaviour through our Equality Policy and Harassment policy, Conduct in the Workplace, 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.

4.1.3. Student Support & Welfare

Student well-being is central to the College's values. We have an extensive welfare support network for students from academic and professional staff, as well as within the student body. College Tutors (for undergraduates) and College Advisers (for graduates) provide support in relation to academic work. A dedicated and experienced Welfare Team, led by a full-time Head of Student Welfare and Wellbeing, is here to deal with day-to-day practical issues; the Junior Deans generally live on the College site and spend a significant portion of their time assisting students with pastoral concerns and running events to bring together the College community (see 4.1.4.). The team undertake regular training and are especially sensitive to matters relating to protected characteristics.

In the student body the Junior Common Room (JCR) and Middle Common Room (MCR) Committees have designated Officers to engage with protected characteristics issues.

4.1.4. Awareness Raising, and Fostering Good Relations

The College strives to foster good relationships between people from different groups. The Welfare Team (see 4.1.3.) work to make St John's 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 major College committees.

4.2 Academic Staff

4.2.1. 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. For more details, view our Equality Policy.

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 have at least one member of each sex, wherever possible.

4.2.2. Conduct and Discipline

We set clear standards of accepted behaviour through our Equality policy 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.

4.2.3. 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: a) staff selection and progression; b) staff grievances, harassment, discipline and access to training.

4.2.4. Support & Welfare

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

4.3. Professional Staff

4.3.1. Recruitment

As in academic 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, ability to perform the job is the primary consideration. For more details, please view the Equality Policy.

The College monitors equal opportunities (section 3.) on all appointments, and both genders are always represented on selection committees, wherever possible.

Most professional posts are advertised locally, and we ensure that we advertise in local papers and at the Job Centre in order to try to reach the majority of the local population and to maximise diversity of application.

4.3.2. Conduct and Discipline

We set clear standards of accepted behaviour through our Equality policy and Harassment policy (identical with the University Harassment Policy) and Code of Conduct Policy.

Staff handbooks contain the major terms and conditions for staff; these are reviewed (and amended as necessary) to ensure they take into account any changes in legislation. 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.

4.3.3. Training and Awareness Raising & Fostering Good Relations

The College aims to eliminate discrimination by providing extensive training to all staff in order to raise awareness of issues pertaining to protected characteristics and to promote positive working practices and foster good relations. Staff have been encouraged to attend Disability Awareness and Equality training courses run by the Oxford Bursars' Training Group.

4.3.4. Support & Welfare

The College aims to provide a supportive working environment for all the staff and is committed to taking specific initiatives for this purpose where appropriate as part of its People Strategy.

Through the Staff Forum, the College reviews the equal opportunities training opportunities available to all of its staff, and introduces additional provision where necessary or desirable. The Fellow for Equality, Diversity & Inclusion assists in the dissemination of equal opportunities information, briefing material, guidance and advice from the University.

The Equality Committee continually seeks to examine and improve the equality of provision in all aspects of our work. The College publishes its Equality Policies widely; in the Handbook, on the website, via notice boards and by discussion in staff meetings. The Equality Committee reports the results of monitoring and consultation to Governing Body. The College reviews its publications and web pages on an ongoing basis to promote access and participation among students from minority groups.

PROCEDURE HISTORY

<i>Date of GB approval</i>	<i>Brief summary of changes</i>	<i>Confirmation that linked documents have updated if necessary</i>	<i>College policy register updated</i>
June 2016	Existing policy amended to match formatting of other College Policies	Confirmed	Yes (Sandra Campbell)
March 2017	Removal of text from 4.1.3 where JCR positions were outlined as these positions are continually restructured. Policy reviewed by Committee	Confirmed	Yes (Sandra Campbell)
March 2018	Policy reviewed by Committee and subsequently approved by GB	Confirmed	Yes (Sandra Campbell)
Jan 2019	Policy reviewed by Committee and subsequently approved by GB	Confirmed	Yes (Sandra Campbell)
Feb 2020	Web links updated. Policy reviewed by Committee and subsequently approved by GB	Confirmed	Yes (Kate Doornik)
Jan 2021	Equality Officer changed to Fellow for Equality. Policy reviewed by Committee and subsequently approved by	Confirmed	Yes (Sandra Campbell)
Jan 2022	Linked to Code of Conduct policy. Equality objectives moved to annual PSED report. Policy reviewed by Committee and subsequently approved by GB	Confirmed	Yes (Iris Burke)
Jan 2023	Replaced non-academic with professional staff and updated internal procedures. Policy reviewed by Committee and subsequently approved by GB.	Confirmed	Yes (Iris Burke)

Jan 2024	Added Head of Student Wellbeing under 4.1.3. Policy reviewed by Committee and approved by GB	Confirmed	Yes (Iris Burke)
May 2025	Policy reviewed, updated titles of responsible officer and HR strategy; approved by GB	Confirmed	Yes (Iris Burke)