

Equality & Diversity Policy

This policy applies to employees and students as well as to associate staff, volunteers, temporary agency staff and those with honorary contracts of employment. Non-executive members and contractors are expected to comply with its provisions and act within the spirit of the policy. This policy applies equally to the treatment of staff, students, visitors, clients, customers and suppliers by our workers, and the treatment of our workers by third parties.

1. Introduction

1.1 SMC wholeheartedly supports the principle of equality of opportunity in both employment and education. UK and European laws impose many requirements upon employers and employees in respect of equality of opportunity. In addition to recognising the need to meet our legal requirements, we believe that by acting according to the principle of equality of opportunity we will benefit from both a workforce and a student-body drawn from a wide cross-section of the community. In this way we aim to recruit and retain the best staff, and to offer an equal opportunity of entry to our programme(s) to all potential students, subject to our stated qualifications for entry and to the criteria outlined in paragraph 2.5 below. We believe that such a policy is also in the best interests of our employees and students.

1.2 As employers we recognise a skilled and committed staff as one of the key factors in delivering the objectives of the institution that employs them. Our aim is therefore to encourage, support and develop the abilities of all our staff wherever they work; to help them to contribute as much as they can to securing our objectives, and to realise their potential. Reciprocally, staff and prospective staff will be expected to show that they are in sympathy with and committed to the aims of St Mellitus College. We also intend that all other aspects of our policies and practices will be consistent with the principle of equality of opportunity.

1.3 As educators we recognise that all who seek access to learning should have the same opportunity to demonstrate their readiness to undertake a particular programme of study, and that the understanding, skills and commitment of students are key factors in their own attainment of the objectives of their programme of study. Our aim is therefore to encourage, support and develop the abilities of all our students; to help them to benefit as much as they can from our programme(s) and to contribute as much as possible to securing their own objectives and those of their programme of study, and to realise their potential.¹ Reciprocally, students and prospective students will be expected to show that they are in sympathy with and committed to the aims of SMC.

2. Principles

2.1 Consistent with this policy, our aim is to provide equality of opportunity for all members of staff and students and for all applicants for employment or training. We aim to ensure that individuals are treated equally and fairly and that

- decisions on recruitment, selection, training, career development and other aspects of employment are based solely on objective and job-related criteria,

¹ This includes compliance with the Church of England's Ministry Division guidance on Student support for students with additional needs studying within theological education institutions

- guidance and decisions on admissions, student development, programme selection, assessment, deployment, reporting and other aspects of education are based solely on educational and formational criteria.

2.2 We will not discriminate in recruitment, selection and career development, directly or indirectly, between employees or between job applicants on the grounds of culture (including race and skin colour), ethnic or national origin, nationality (including citizenship), age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, HIV status, social class, marital status, membership of a trade union, political affiliation or (except in the circumstances described in paragraph 2.5 below) religion.

2.3 We will not discriminate in admission, education, personal development and pastoral care, directly or indirectly, between students or between prospective students on the grounds of culture (including race and skin colour), ethnic or national origin, nationality (including citizenship), age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, HIV status, social class, marital status, membership of a trade union, political affiliation or (except in the circumstances described in paragraph 2.5 below) religion.

2.4 We are also committed to equality of opportunity in all other aspects of our human resource policies and practice, including terms and conditions of employment, education and training (including induction and orientation programmes), remuneration, work allocation, appraisal, assessment, disciplinary and dismissal procedures and exit and termination mechanisms.

2.5 Given that SMC exists specifically to:

- prepare for public ministry candidates selected by the Church of England and by other denominations which are members of Churches Together in England;
- provide theological training and Christian education for other persons;
- collaborate with and provide support for other ministerial training and Christian education.

It is lawful and may be appropriate in appointing persons as members of staff and in admitting persons as students to take account of candidates' religious affiliation.

3. Implementation

3.1 All our staff recruitment and selection procedures are designed to recruit the most suitable available person for the post. We may seek to draw opportunities to the attention of groups that are under-represented in our workforce or in the relevant part of our workforce.

3.2 Candidates for authorised public ministry in the Church of England and other denominations that are members of Churches Together in England are generally selected and sponsored for training by their Church. It is our policy to admit such students unless there are compelling educational reasons for not doing so. So far as other candidates for admission are concerned, we do not discriminate between them on the basis of any of the criteria listed in paragraph 2.3 above.

3.3 The Dean and Directors will take steps to raise the awareness of this policy and its application among all members of staff, including providing suitable training.

3.4 We are working towards ensuring that all those involved in recruitment and selection, including those who are not employees, such as Council members who sit on appointments panels, are aware of and abide by the provisions of the relevant legislation and this policy.

3.5 We are committed to providing equality of opportunity for career development for all members of staff with the skills, experience, qualifications, training, attitudes and aptitudes required for specific posts.

3.6 Employees and students are entitled to a workplace and learning environment free from hostility. Intimidating behaviour also prevents both employees and students from working effectively and denies them satisfaction in work and learning. Harassment, including sexual and racial harassment, bullying and victimisation are all therefore unacceptable and are disciplinary offences. (Such behaviour may also in some cases be illegal.)

3.7 We are committed to providing equality of opportunity, wherever practicable and making reasonable adjustments where necessary, to all members of our staff and applicants for employment whether or not they have a disability. We are also committed to providing equality of opportunity to all members of our staff and applicants for employment regardless of their HIV status. If you are disabled, or become disabled in the course of your employment with us, you are encouraged to tell us about your condition. This is to enable us to support you as much as possible. You may also wish to advise your line manager or the HR team of any reasonable adjustments to your working conditions or the duties of your job which you consider to be necessary, or which would assist you in the performance of your duties. Your line manager or the HR team / HR Officer (Director of College Operations) may wish to consult with you and with your medical adviser(s) about possible reasonable adjustments. Careful consideration will be given to any such proposals and they will be accommodated where possible and proportionate to the needs of your job. Nevertheless, there may be circumstances where it will not be reasonable for us to accommodate the suggested adjustments and we will ensure that we provide you with information as to the basis of our decision not to make any adjustments.

3.8 Grievance procedures are in place for employees to pursue complaints including allegations of unfairness in relation to selection, career development (for example, promotion) or training decisions. Procedures are also in place for students to pursue complaints, including allegations of unfairness in relation to the educational and formational programme and to assessment.

3.9 We shall not tolerate acts which breach this policy and all instances of such behaviour or alleged behaviour will be taken seriously and fully and promptly investigated. Action by any employee that is contrary to this policy renders that person liable to disciplinary action, which may lead to dismissal.

3.10 Those making a complaint in good faith will be given a full, fair and sensitive hearing and may do so without fear of subsequent victimisation.

3.11 All members of staff, including Associate and Voluntary staff, and all students, will be made aware of this policy.

4. Responsibility for implementation

4.1 It is the responsibility of every member of staff to ensure the application of this policy. The success of the policy depends on the contribution made by everyone, in their own behaviour, in discouraging discrimination by colleagues and in encouraging good practice.

4.2 The Dean has responsibility within SMC for this policy.

5. Applicant and workforce monitoring

5.1 We accept the responsibility to consider carefully any recommendations made to us under this policy. If we agree that change is needed, we will provide where reasonable and practicable the resources necessary for implementing those recommendations.

6. Status of this policy

6.1 This policy and procedure form part of the terms and conditions of all our staff.

7. Review

7.1 This policy is reviewed regularly by the Executive Team.

Document Information

Prepared by: Rachael Wooldridge, Senior Quality Coordinator

Version Number: 1.0

Approval Date: September 2017

Approved by: Executive Team

Date of Last Review: September 2023

Date of Next Review: September 2025