

# Somerville College

## Equality Policy



**Somerville College is committed to fostering an inclusive culture which promotes equality, values diversity and maintains a working, learning and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all its staff and students are respected.**

Somerville embraces diversity amongst the members of its community and seeks to achieve equity in the experience, progression and achievement of all students, academic members and support staff through the implementation of transparent policies, practices and procedures and the provision of effective support.

The College recognises that equality should be embedded in all its activities and will seek to promote awareness of equality and foster good practice. Somerville is committed to a programme of action to support its equality policy, to monitoring its effectiveness, and to publishing information on progress towards its equality aims.

In exercising its policies, practices, procedures and other functions, Somerville College will have due regard to its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and to the protected characteristics specified within it, as well as other relevant circumstances including parental or caring responsibilities, contract type, and working hours. The characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010 are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status (in employment), pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief (including lack of belief), sex and sexual orientation.

In particular, Somerville College will:

- Encourage applications for study and employment from the widest pool of potential candidates, especially where representation is disproportionately low;
- Take steps to meet the particular needs of individuals from protected groups where these are different from the needs of others.
- **In respect of students**, seek to attract applicants of the highest quality and potential, regardless of background. Decisions on the admission of students will be based solely on the individual merits of each candidate and the application of selection criteria appropriate to the course of study.
- **In respect of staff**, ensure that entry into employment and progression within employment are determined solely by criteria which are related to the duties of a particular post and the relevant salary scale; and support career development and progression, where possible in a small organisation, to ensure diverse representation and participation at all levels.

Somerville College expects all members of its community to treat each other with respect, courtesy and consideration and does not tolerate any form of bullying or harassment. The College follows the University [Policy on Harassment and Bullying](#), which is supported by the University [Harassment Advisory Service](#).

### **Application of the Equality Policy**

This policy applies to all members of Somerville College community, including students, academic members, support staff, applicants, associate members, and visitors.

All members of the College community are expected to act in accordance with this policy and to treat colleagues with respect at all times.

All visitors to the College, including contractors, and people operating on behalf of the College, whether on College premises or elsewhere, have a responsibility to behave in accordance with the principles of this policy.

## **Somerville College's commitment**

Somerville College will:

- seek to embed equality in all its activities
- have regard to its obligations under relevant legislation, including the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty 2011
- publicise this policy, and any relevant codes of practice and guidance
- use an evidence-based approach where possible to inform its activities to increase equality and to measure the impact of any changes
- develop equality objectives and an action plan, and report on progress toward attaining those objectives
- monitor and publish data on its academic members, support staff, students and applicants; and
- regularly review this policy and all associated codes of practice and guidance.

## **Responsibilities**

### ***Governing Body***

The Governing Body will provide mechanisms through which the University of Oxford and Somerville College's strategic objectives for equality and diversity can be determined.

### ***The Principal***

The Treasurer will provide leadership on equality and diversity and oversee the development of equality policy frameworks and their application in the College, working with College committees (all of which have a remit for equality issues), the Equality and Diversity Working Group, and relevant colleagues as appropriate.

### ***The Equality and Diversity Working Group***

The Equality and Diversity Working Group reports to the Finance Committee and will advise on the development of strategy for work on equality and diversity, covering staff and students and embracing all protected groups. The EDWG, supported by the Human Resources Department will work with the University's Equality and Diversity Unit (EDU) and external advisers to support equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination within the College's staff community.

In particular it will:

- consider existing and emerging equality legislation with a view to identifying relevant issues to be translated into policies appropriate to the College environment
- provide information and guidance to the Finance Committee and other College members as appropriate to enable them to discharge their responsibilities
- work with equal opportunities representatives and the Communications Manager to facilitate communication to and consultation with specific groups of staff
- provide monitoring of key strategic issues to Finance Committee
- provide advice on the employment of disabled staff
- provide support to students with a disability (note, advice and support for disabled students is available from the University's Disability Advisory Service. See: [www.ox.ac.uk/students/shw/das/](http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/shw/das/))
- work with student equal opportunities representatives and academic members to facilitate communication to and consultation with specific groups of staff

### ***Fellows and Senior Managers***

Fellows and Senior Managers are responsible for the day-to-day implementation of this policy and for supporting the delivery of Somerville College and the University's strategic objectives for equality and diversity within the College constituency for which they are responsible.

### ***Managers***

All managers are responsible for ensuring that equality is embedded in the work of their team.

### ***All academic staff***

All academic staff should promote an inclusive research and learning environment.

### ***All support staff and students***

All support staff and students have a responsibility to observe this policy.

## **Complaints**

Somerville College regards any breach of this policy by any member of the College community as a serious matter to be dealt with through its agreed procedures.

The procedures for dealing with concerns about breaches of the policy are set out below.

### ***Students***

#### **a) Applicants**

For feedback on admissions decisions, see: Undergraduate admissions:

[www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate\\_courses/why\\_oxford/codes\\_and\\_procedures/feedback.html](http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate_courses/why_oxford/codes_and_procedures/feedback.html)

Postgraduate admissions:

[www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/postgraduate\\_courses/apply/legal\\_information/university\\_policies.html](http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/postgraduate_courses/apply/legal_information/university_policies.html)

#### **b) Current students**

Allegations of harassment and bullying are covered by University Policy on Harassment and Bullying. See:

[www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/harassmentadvice/policyandprocedure](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/harassmentadvice/policyandprocedure)

Complaints about equality and diversity issues related exclusively to college matters should be taken up with the relevant college officers, namely the Treasurer, Senior Tutor, or Human Resources Manager.

Other complaints should be addressed to the Proctors: [Complaints Procedures](#)

### ***Staff***

#### **a) Applicants**

Applicants for employment should refer any concerns in writing to the chair of the selection panel in the first instance.

#### **b) Current staff**

Allegations of harassment and bullying are covered by University Policy on Harassment and Bullying

[www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/harassmentadvice/policyandprocedure](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/harassmentadvice/policyandprocedure) and Somerville College procedures.

Other complaints should be handled under the relevant grievance procedure:

## **Review**

Governing Body, on the advice of Somerville College Finance Committee, will review this policy on a three year cycle. The first review will take place in Hilary Term 2016.

**Policy updated and agreed by Governing Body 04.12.2013**