

# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy v2

The Open College

|                         |                |
|-------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Document Version</b> | 2.0            |
| <b>Owner</b>            | QA Office      |
| <b>Approved By</b>      | Academic Board |
| <b>Effective Date</b>   | 2025-05-01     |
| <b>Next Review Date</b> | 2026-05-01     |
| <b>Status</b>           | Approved       |

# Contents

|          |                               |          |
|----------|-------------------------------|----------|
| <b>1</b> | <b>Document Control</b>       | <b>2</b> |
| 1.1      | Record of Revisions . . . . . | 2        |



Figure 1: A close up of a sign Description automatically generated

## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

### The Open College

## 1 Document Control

### Document Version

2

Responsibility

Leadership Team

Review Cycle

Yearly

Next Review

May 2027

### 1.1 Record of Revisions

| Version | Date     | Description       | Approved by |
|---------|----------|-------------------|-------------|
| 2       | May 2025 | Version 2 updates | AB          |

## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

### Policy Statement:

The Open College is committed to fostering an inclusive and respectful environment in which all learners, employees, and stakeholders are treated with dignity, fairness, and consideration. We actively promote equality and equity, value diversity in all its forms, and embed inclusive practice across teaching, learning, assessment, governance, and operational activity.

We recognise that supporting inclusion and removing barriers to participation enables all members of our learning community to thrive. This policy sets out our strategic commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and outlines the principles that underpin our approach.

### Definitions:

- **Equality** refers to the principle of treating individuals fairly, with dignity and free from discrimination.
- **Equity** acknowledges that individuals may experience different barriers and that additional support may be required to achieve fair outcomes.
- **Diversity** refers to the presence and recognition of differences — including background, culture, identity, belief, ability, and experience.

- **Inclusion** is about fostering a sense of belonging where everyone feels respected, supported, and able to participate fully.

**Scope:**

This policy applies to all members of The Open College community — learners, administrative and academic employees, contracted tutors, service providers, and other stakeholders. It covers all aspects of college life, including:

- Admissions and access to programmes.
- Teaching, learning and assessment.
- Learner support and communications.
- Recruitment and human resource practices.
- Governance, decision-making and leadership.

**Legal and Policy Context:**

The Open College operates in line with the Equal Status Acts 2000–2018 and other relevant Irish equality legislation. We are committed to preventing discrimination across the nine protected grounds: gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, and membership of the Travelers community.

This policy is supported by the following institutional documents:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Online Learning Framework
- Assessment and Reasonable Accommodation Policy.

**Commitments:**

The Open College commits to the following actions:

- **Inclusive Access and Participation**

Promote equality of access, participation, and achievement for all learners, especially those from underrepresented or marginalised groups.

- **Reasonable Accommodation**

Provide appropriate supports for learners with disabilities or additional educational needs to ensure full participation in teaching, learning and assessment.

- **Respect and Dignity**

Foster a culture of respect, dignity and inclusion in all interactions, communications and learning environments. We have zero tolerance for harassment, bullying, victimisation, or discrimination.

- **Inclusive Teaching and Assessment**

Promote inclusive practice in all teaching and assessment methods through staff development and the application of UDL principles.

- **Staff Awareness and Development**

Support ongoing professional development for all staff in EDI-related areas, including inclusive pedagogy, unconscious bias, and cultural competence.

- **Governance and Recruitment**

Ensure equality principles are embedded in staff recruitment, committee structures, and decision-making processes.

- **Data and Monitoring**

Monitor learner outcomes and feedback disaggregated by equality grounds where feasible, to identify disparities and inform continuous improvement.

- **Feedback and Engagement**

Engage learners meaningfully through structured feedback mechanisms, learner panels, and representative organisations to ensure diverse voices shape college practice.

- **Policy and Procedure Review**

Review all policies and procedures to ensure they reflect EDI principles and do not unintentionally disadvantage any group.

**Complaints and Redress:**

Any learner, staff member or stakeholder who experiences discrimination or exclusion may raise a concern through the College's formal complaints procedure. All complaints will be treated seriously, sensitively and in confidence, and responded to in line with our QA policies.

Where issues relate to multiple policies (e.g. conduct and disability), a proportionate and coordinated response will be taken.

**Communication and Accessibility:**

All official communications, study materials, and learner supports will be provided in formats that are accessible and appropriate to learner needs. Learners can request materials in alternative formats at any time.

**Communication and Accessibility:**

The Open College values learner input in shaping an inclusive culture. We provide multiple opportunities for feedback and consultation, including:

- Online surveys and feedback forms
- Tutor and learner support meetings
- Focus groups and learner panels
- Representation through learner liaison channels

This feedback is reviewed annually and informs updates to policies, procedures, and programme delivery.

**Review and Responsibility:**

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or earlier if legislative or organisational changes require it. Responsibility for implementation lies with senior management, with oversight by the Academic Board.