Gender Equality Scheme

1 Introduction
1.1 At University College Falmouth we believe that questions of gender equality are of central relevance to the core functions of our institution and, of course, to wider society beyond. We are committed to work proactively to promote gender equality and to eliminate sex discrimination at the University College. This work will progress alongside our specific work towards race and disability equality.

In moving towards a vision of the proposed Arts University Cornwall, the University College has a unique opportunity to develop a leadership role in promoting equality of opportunity, to espouse and champion cultural diversity and to model the best in inclusive practice as an employer and place of learning and teaching. University College Falmouth now has the opportunity – and responsibility - to develop a range of dynamic, forward looking ways to ensure that we are a truly inclusive place in which to work and study. In this context we believe that gender equality is a key area of focus. Our inclusion of issues relating to lesbian, gay, bisexual (LGB) staff and students, while not required by the Gender Equality Duty, is an example of our intention to be forward thinking and bold in how we approach this leadership role. Developing our Gender Equality Scheme and Action Plan require us all to give thought to how we can each contribute to shaping the University College vision to provide “equal opportunities for all to realise their creative and intellectual potential”.

In response to the Gender Equality Duty this Scheme will set out the gender equality objectives of the University College and includes an Action Plan describing how we will meet them, and by when.

1.2 Legislative context
Gender, or “sex” is a “protected characteristic” within the Equality Act (2010) and the Gender Equality Duty has been replaced by the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). The public sector equality duty requires HEIs to show due regard to the need to:
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it

The duty covers all the protected characteristics recognised within the Equality Act with one exception. HEIs will only have to demonstrate due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination in employment for the characteristics of marriage and civil partnership.

Positive action
HEIs can provide separate targeted provision around education, training and welfare to different groups on the basis of protected characteristics.
These voluntary positive action measures must look to alleviate disadvantage experienced by people who share a protected characteristic, reduce underrepresentation in relation to particular activities, and meet particular needs. Such measures would need to be a proportionate way of achieving the relevant aim. Sometimes an HEI will have reasonable justification for not providing targeted support.

The Equal Opportunities Commission (since October 2007 subsumed into the Equality and Human Rights Commission) provided some useful context for our work in this area:
The gender equality Duty came into force in April 2007 and is the biggest change in sex equality legislation in thirty years, since the introduction of the Sex Discrimination Act (1974) itself. It has been introduced in recognition of the need for a radical new approach to equality – one which places more responsibility with service providers to think strategically about gender equality, rather than leaving it to individuals to challenge poor practice.\(^1\)

Gender roles and relationships structure [people’s] lives. Women are frequently disadvantaged by policies and practices that do not recognise their greater caring responsibilities, the different pattern of their working lives, their more limited access to resources and their greater vulnerability to domestic violence and sexual assault. Men are also disadvantaged by workplace cultures that do not support their family or childcare responsibilities, by family services that assume they have little or no role in parenting, or by health services which do not recognise their different needs. Both sexes suffer from stereotyping of their roles and needs.\(^2\)

1.3 Under the new duty University College Falmouth is expected to have ‘due regard to’ the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment and to promote equality of opportunity between men and women in all of their and our functions.

We are also required to have the same due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment in employment and vocational training (which includes higher education), for people who intend to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment – transgender people.

1.4 In addition, there are “specific duties” which, in brief, are:

a) To prepare and publish a gender equality scheme, showing how we will meet our general and specific duties and setting out our gender equality objectives
b) In formulating our overall objectives, to consider the need to include objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gap
c) To gather and use information on how our policies and practices affect gender equality in the workforce and in the delivery of services
d) To consult stakeholders (i.e. employees, service users and others, including trade unions) and take account of relevant information in order to determine our gender equality objectives
e) To assess the impact of our current and proposed policies and practices on gender equality
f) To implement the actions set out in our scheme within three years, unless it is unreasonable or impracticable to do so
g) To report against the scheme every year and review the scheme at least every three years

1.5 Support for working and studying parents/carers is essential to progressing gender equality and is therefore an integral part of this Scheme, as are appropriate provisions for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) staff and students.

2 The Falmouth context

2.1 Strategic vision

University College Falmouth is a leader in arts, design, media and performance education. We are conscious of our position as one of the key players in higher education in Cornwall and the South West, and of the responsibilities that come with that role. Our aim is to become a leader and beacon of good practice in the field of equality and diversity in the region and this Scheme forms a vital part of the

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\(^1\) Jenny Watson Chair, Equal Opportunities Commission, November 2006

\(^2\) Gender Equality Duty Code of Practice 1.20
foundation on which we wish to build that reputation. We are proud of being different, and we aim to celebrate diversity within our own community, whether in our staff and student profile, or the range of courses offered and skills taught.

Our Strategic Plan (2008) outlines our aims and values as we move towards the goal of full university status, and is supported by three cross-cutting themes: partnership, sustainability and equality and diversity. Our Gender Equality Scheme supports and should be considered explicitly part of the University College Strategic Plan.

The University College is committed to continue to develop processes that promote and support equality of opportunity for all those able to benefit from Further and Higher Education at Falmouth, and to promulgate our Equal Opportunities Policies in all appropriate ways. In some ways we are at the beginning of this path; the development of this Gender Equality Scheme and Action Plan require us all to give thought to how we can each contribute to shaping the University College to become as accessible – in it’s widest possible sense- to all who wish to study, work or visit here.

3 Falmouth’s Gender Equality Scheme
3.1 How this will work
In the ongoing development of our GES, the various elements of our specific Duties require the University College to:

a) Gather information and consult with stakeholders
b) Impact assess services and policies
c) Set objectives of scheme
d) Take action
e) Report annually
f) Review every three years
g) Impact assessment of new and existing policies (ongoing)

Consultation with staff and students includes the following:

a) Staff and student focus groups, including conversations with union, student union & student reps
b) Questionnaires: online and hard copies
c) Conversations with external stakeholders, such as local schools, gender rights groups, LGBT groups

For staff at the University College, the following areas are considered:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equal pay</th>
<th>Job types and areas</th>
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<td>Recruitment, appraisal and promotion</td>
<td>Working hours, flexible working</td>
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<td>Training and development</td>
<td>Grievances</td>
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<td>Work-Life Balance</td>
<td>Pregnancy and caring responsibilities</td>
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<td>Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual staff</td>
<td>Reasons for leaving</td>
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<td>Sexual harassment and/or bullying</td>
<td>Disciplinary action and dismissal</td>
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<td>Issues relating to transgender staff</td>
<td>Committee representation</td>
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For students this consultation includes the following areas:

- Curriculum
- Accommodation Services
- Careers Service
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual
- Learning and Teaching
- Student's Union
- Widening Participation
- Pregnancy and caring
3.2 Equality analysis
The process of equality analysis (formerly EqIA) is a requirement of the Gender Equality Duty and offers the opportunity for all areas of the University College to engage with equality issues in a systematic manner. It will also produce actions that will form part of our GES Action Plan.

The Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) provides a clear explanation of the purpose of EqIA:

“An equality impact assessment (EIA) is a mechanism that allows an organisation to review its policies (including less formalised practices) to ensure that discrimination does not occur on the grounds of race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, and religion or belief. In essence, an EIA can be seen as a means of quality control, or an ‘equality MOT’. It enables organisations to promote equality and ensure that inappropriate discrimination is not taking place, which helps them to run effectively and efficiently”.  

The University College will engage in training and development activity in order to ensure that we employ best practice in carrying out EqIA. Initially the Equality and Diversity Officer will be responsible for coordinating pilot assessments and for commissioning and/or delivering training to departments/teams across the University College. In the absence of dedicated resources to carry out EqIA, it is expected that each department/team will conduct their own and that results will be compiled and reported on by the Equality and Diversity Office.

3.3 Our key gender objectives
We have divided our objectives into three broad areas of focus: students, staff and whole-University College. These objectives are to be met within a three year period, at the end of which this Scheme and Action Plan will be reviewed and revised.

3.3.1 Students
a) Admissions, progression and experience, student-carers
b) Mainstreaming gender and LGBT equality across curriculum
c) Support networks
d) Study-life balance, access to childcare to students with caring responsibilities

3.3.2 Staff
a) Equal Pay Audit:
   b) pay gaps identified and causes addressed where appropriate;

3 Briefing: Using equality impact assessments, ECU, October 2007
c) results distributed to senior managers;
d) ongoing, annual examination
e) Evaluation of recruitment, career progression and experience by gender
f) Work-life balance – carers, flexible working, access to childcare

3.3.3 University College-wide
a) Publication of Harassment and Bullying Policy; develop robust reporting procedure to include incidents of sexual/gender-based harassment
b) Estates, sport and campus services
c) General awareness raising opportunities
e) Equality impact assessment: timetable for implementation over three years, initial screening and detailed assessments.

3.3.4 Opportunities for individuals, teams and departments to comment on or add actions to the Action Plan:

Review of Annual Equality and Diversity Report at committee/team level
Through members of the Equality and Diversity Committee

3.4 Publishing, reporting and reviewing

The Equality and Diversity Office is responsible for writing our Gender Equality Scheme Annual Report and the Equality and Diversity Committee is responsible for reviewing and approving it. The purpose of the Annual Report is to:

1. mark progress against key milestones on our Action Plan
2. continue to compile and monitor baseline data on men, women and transgender people at the University College
3. analyse and draw conclusions from the information gathering that has taken place, showing whether further information is necessary for conclusions to be drawn, and if so, what that might be
4. plan future development of the scheme, including what impact assessments each area of the University College is planning to carry out in the coming year

This report will be presented to the Board of Governors and the ESDG so that the actions we have taken and progress we have made is transparent to internal and external stakeholders. This may or may not be at the end of April each year; it is expected that the schedule for reporting on our equality schemes & policies will be reviewed soon, with a possible future reporting date coinciding with—or forming part of- the publication of a comprehensive Equality and Diversity Annual Report each October/November.

Following review by the Committee, the Scheme and Action Plan will be sent to all Departments, Teams and Committees and made available on the University College Intranet and Internet sites.

We will review our objectives at least every three years to ensure we are making progress and responding to new issues as they arise. One of the keys to the success of our Action Plan will be that it is re-visited often, tweaked and updated to make it a living, relevant document at the heart of our developing equalities strategy.

4 Work so far

The following represents information gathered from across the University College. The analysis of this information has been used to guide the choice of our Scheme’s objectives. The success of progress towards these key objectives and areas where action is needed will be measured against national and sector wide benchmarks, where available and appropriate to use.

4.1 Leadership and responsibility

The Equality and Diversity Committee has responsibility for advising the Management Board on the development, implementation and effectiveness of the
University College’s Equal Opportunities policies, as approved by the Board of Governors, with particular regard to the University College’s statutory requirements. The Committee reports to the Management Board and normally meets once per term.

The Equality and Diversity Office has responsibility to lead on the development of policies and procedures across the full range of equality and diversity issues. There is recognition that although a central role of the EDO is to act as a catalyst for equality and diversity activities at Falmouth, the responsibility for advancing and developing the Equality ethos at the University College lies with each member of the staff and students and not in one individual or committee.

Our Gender Equality Scheme is a crucial element of our suite of Equality and Diversity policies that aim to reflect the ethos, character and aims of the University College with regards to race, religion and belief, disability, age, gender and sexual orientation. Read together, our Equal Opportunities policies are a strong statement of our commitment to inclusion, tolerance and freedom of expression at University College Falmouth. The intent is that these documents exist as living and relevant points of reference for our Community, and that they not languish as inert and obscure statements of policy.

4.2 Learning and teaching
University College Falmouth prides itself on offering a diverse offering of learning opportunities. Issues surrounding equality and human rights in general and sexuality, gender and gender identity in particular are explored across the curriculum. Some examples have included:

a) English with Media Studies: Women and Film, Masculinity as Spectacle
b) 3D Design: Identity & Difference
c) Textile Design, Photography: Historical and Cultural Studies
d) Contemporary Crafts: Identity and Audience, Modernist Issues and Identity
e) Graphic Design: Difference and Identity, Propaganda and Persuasion
f) Journalism: Media Ethics and Human Rights

4.3 Personnel and staff
4.3.1 Policies
The University College’s existing policies and other documents that relate to issues of gender equality are:

a) Equal Opportunities Policy
b) Race Equality Policy
c) Gender Equality Scheme & Action Plan
d) Joint Statement on Harassment & Dignity at Work
e) Harassment and Bullying Policy
f) Maternity Leave Policy
g) Leave for domestic and personal reasons including
   i) Paternity Leave
   ii) Parental Leave
   iii) Adoption leave
   iv) Carer’s leave

4.3.2 Equal Pay
An equal Pay Audit was carried out in September 2008, based on a snapshot of staff data taken on April 30th, 2008. Initial audit results form Appendix D, below. Union representatives will be asked for their input into the evaluation stage of this audit, before the results are published.

4.3.3 Staff training and development
Institutional responsibility for gender equality training rests with the Equality and Diversity Office. Such training must include awareness-raising around gender, trans and LGB equality and the relevant requirements of the Duty.
This training occurs as part of new staff inductions and ongoing equality training workshops, e-learning and other opportunities.

4.3.4 Staff recruitment, selection, promotion and retention
The University College regularly monitors and benchmarks our staff profile in terms of gender, ethnicity, disability and age across all levels as part of our Equality and Diversity Annual Report (see 3.4, above). As necessary we will consider how to achieve a more balanced staff profile and to provide effective role models for a diverse student population. We intend that our recruitment, selection and promotion procedures will be applied fairly and consistently and will reflect good equal opportunities practice.

The University College Employee Handbook (Section C1.4.2 Gender) states that,

“The University College will consider ways to achieve a gender balance in the chairing of meetings, and to provide students with access to same-sex tutors and technicians for support as required”

Members of staff responsible for recruitment of employees and for considering promotion or other rewards will be required to receive training in non-discriminatory practice.

4.3.5 Committee Membership
HEFCE requires all Universities to monitor the membership of their committees in terms of disability, gender and race. The University College Employee Gender Profile 2008 (Appendix D) presents a full picture of Committee membership seen from a gender standpoint. Currently no “top level” committees are chaired by females at the University College. Males on these committees represent 69% of total membership, disproportionately more than their 44% of all employees.

4.3.5 Flexible working
University College Falmouth will consider proposals to extend flexible working practices to meet individual and University College needs, and to enable staff to combine work and family responsibilities more successfully. The University College acknowledges that staff are most productive when they have achieved a work-life balance that enables them to meet their responsibilities outside work. Research suggests that increasingly the opportunity to achieve a work-life balance can be as important a factor as pay and benefits in attracting and retaining staff and therefore [is of benefit to] both staff and UCF as an employer.4

4.4 Staff and student networks:
There are currently no formal or informal gender-based support groups at the University College. The University College is committed to encourage and facilitate such groups, however, and will provide opportunities for staff to discuss the need for them. The FXU (Falmouth and Exeter Students Union) Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Society is a support and social group open to any open minded individual of any sexual orientation or gender identity. There is no similar group for University College LGBT staff, but the Support area of the HelpMe online forum is an place that some staff and students have used to share information and network in general.

4.5 Consultation: perceptions of staff and students
Issues relating to gender/gender identity and LGB were not explicitly addressed in the most recent staff satisfaction survey carried out in 2005. However, the results did include the following comments, which do bear a relationship to gender in the workplace:

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4 UCF Work-Life Balance Policy, August 2008
Against a national benchmark group of HEIs the University College [...] is slightly below the norm for work life balance, diversity, equality, communications and staff involvement.

**Diversity and equality:**
just over 79% of staff indicated that they felt the University College is committed to the promotion of equality and opportunity and 83% felt the University College aims to promote a challenging and vibrant learning environment in which diversity, respect and dignity influence relationships.

**Work-life balance:** just over 63% feel the University College helps them balance their work and personal commitments and 57% feel everyone is treated with equal regard to help them balance work and personal commitments.

**Discrimination:** around 15% of staff indicated that they had been discriminated against in the last 12 months. The most common reason cited for this was job status (41% of those indicating they had been discriminated against), the next most common reason was age (25%) and part time status (25%). Just under 3% said they had felt discriminated against because of their race/ethnic origin, disability or fixed term status.5

4.6 University College gender profile
Specific data relating to gender can be found in the most recent *Equality & Diversity Annual Report*. Across the majority of courses at undergraduate and postgraduate level there is a good gender mix of students. Some selected data highlighted in the Gender Equality Scheme Annual Report 2008 shows that there are some courses where there is a disproportionate ratio of female to male students. Some courses traditionally attract more students of a particular gender, but applications and acceptances on these courses are monitored to see if there are any barriers facing unrepresented gender groups.

**Existing information on staff**
Current, comprehensive information on staff from a gender perspective is available in the *Equality & Diversity Annual Report*.

5 **Looking to the future: progressing our action plan**

5.1 **Collaborative partners**
The Board of Governors has overall responsibility for approval of this Scheme. The future development of our GES and Action Plan will be advanced primarily by the Equality and Diversity Office, in consultation and partnership with the following:

a) staff and students at the University College
b) The Equality and Diversity Steering Group
c) Students Union and other student representatives
d) Accessibility Network Group
e) Trade Unions
f) Widening Participation office
g) Local and regional gender rights and support organisations
h) any other interested staff, students and members of the wider community.

We recognise the critical importance of incorporating the views & needs of staff and students across all three campuses in University College Strategic Reviews, Corporate Strategy and in the ongoing development of this Scheme and Action Plan.

It is recognised that the students union (FXU) is a key partner and opportunities will be sought to work closely with them in this context. In addition, the University College will be encouraging FXU to develop its own strategy and statements on gender equality (as well as on other equality strands). In addition, the University

5 *Summary of the Staff Survey Results 2005*, University University College Falmouth, prepared by NHS Partners’ Research & Information
College will continue to seek out opportunities to engage and work with individuals and groups in the local community on issues relating to gender equality, and to consider gender equality when such interactions do occur.

5.2 Strategic planning

Equality, diversity, access and inclusion is a key, cross-cutting theme identified in the vision for Arts University Cornwall. As such, gender — along with race and disability — equality must be at the heart of future discussions and considerations in order to build a truly inclusive place in which to work and study. As these plans develop, close collaboration of teams across the University College must continue, along with ongoing meaningful consultation of staff and students to ensure that this occurs.