



ZEST! Essentials: Equality and Diversity

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ZEST! Essentials:

Principles of Student Assessment

1 Who is this guide for?

This guide is for all lecturers in the university although the ways they will use it will vary eg:

- Raising awareness of the equality and diversity issues which lecturers need to address in their day to day interactions with students and staff;
- Students on the PgC Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (LTHE) seeking to address these issues in preparing their Goal B portfolios;
- Supervisors and mentors working with PgC LTHE students and supporting their professional development;
- Lecturers who wish to gain a greater understanding of these issues and the implications for their teaching;
- Lecturers with responsibilities for supporting student learning through academic-related activities;
- Admissions Tutors making decisions about offers to potential students;
- Programme Planning Board Chairs, Programme Organisers/Leaders and Associate Deans Quality (ADQs) responsible for developing and monitoring implementation of programme or school-based policies on these issues.

This resource guide can be read and used at many different levels. The activities contained in it range from the very simple and straightforward to potentially more in-depth. The level at which you engage with the activities may also be context dependent eg it may be useful to know a little about the European and UK contexts for good practice in equality and diversity but more important to know how these issues are dealt with in your own discipline.

All staff have a personal responsibility to ensure that the university's anti-discriminatory policies and procedures are implemented.

2 Why do lecturers need to know about equality and diversity?

Equality and diversity represent major areas of concern for all lecturers in higher education, both as employees and in their role as lecturers. This guide is only concerned with the latter.

Some aspects of equality and diversity are the subject of specific Acts of Parliament. Others are subject to legislation in the form of Regulations.

Although it is not essential that lecturers familiarise themselves with all the details of the legislation it is an absolute requirement that they understand the implications of each aspect and how it impinges on student recruitment, teaching and learning support activities.

One of the most important points to note is the personal responsibility that all staff have for promoting good relations and behaving in a way which is antidiscriminatory. Another requirement is for the university to produce and implement policies which promote good practice in these areas.

No resource guide on equality of access to, and participation in higher education would be complete without looking at the issues inherent in widening participation and lifelong learning, so these issues are also addressed in this guide.

2.1 Activity

Look up the Universities Scotland website. What does the update on social inclusion and higher education have to say on equality and diversity issues.

2.2 Source of information

[Universities Scotland](#)

3 What do lecturers need to know?

3.1 Legislation and its implications

The major pieces of legislation concerned with equality and diversity are:

- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Race Relations Act 1976
- Race Relations Amendment Act 2000
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA)2001, which is Part IV of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- A number of European Directives and Articles

All of this legislation is now fully in force and applies in higher education in the UK. The DDA (2005) demands positive, considered action from those who design and deliver courses of study in higher education. In March 2005 the Equality Bill was introduced into the House of Commons to update all current legislation, to be fully compliant with the European Convention on Human Rights.

Other aspects of equality and diversity legislation are covered by Regulations eg discrimination on the grounds of age, religion or belief and sexual orientation. A final category has no specific legislation but is good practice eg policies against bullying and harassment.

Additional information and advice on the legislation and its implications are available from a number of sources, principally:

- Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC)
- Commission for Racial Equality (CRE)
- Disability Rights Commission (DRC)
- Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities
- Codes of Practice from the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)
- Good practice guides from bodies like ACAS on age, religion or belief, sexual orientation and bullying and harassment

Part 1 of the Equality Bill (2005) deals with the creation of a single body, the Commission for Equality and Human Rights, which would replace several of these bodies.

Anyone seeking a comprehensive guide to terms and issues should visit the A-Z of Equality and Diversity on the Equality Challenge Unit's website.

3.2 The Scottish dimension

All of the bodies mentioned in section 3.1 have Scottish offices which offer interpretations of the legislation and give advice in the Scottish context. All can be accessed from the UK websites. The Scottish Disability Team (SDT) provides advice and guidance on compliance with disability legislation in higher education.

In 1999 the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC)¹, began funding the Teachability project. Its first major publication in 2000 was entitled "Teachability: Creating an Accessible Curriculum for Students with Disabilities". Since then a number of additional booklets have been produced to aid lecturers in higher education to produce curricula and materials which are accessible to students with disabilities. The project is currently funded until 2006.

3.3 Policies and procedures at GCU

As a key part of its 2010 Vision, GCU has an Equality and Diversity Strategy with associated policies and procedures, including a high level Equality and Diversity Group. Further information can be found on the [ALLinclusive] website. [ALLinclusive] is the brand name of the University's promotional work on equality and diversity. In addition to providing a comprehensive resource on equality and diversity issues and sources of information, the website has a very useful page of definitions of terms frequently used in Equality and Diversity discussions.

Under the GCU Partners in Delivery (PiD) initiative "a unique partnership arrangement has been formed involving all Caledonian students, the Students' Association, employers and the staff of the university." It sets out the university commitments to all students to assure the quality of the student experience and the student responsibilities to make this partnership work.

3.4 Widening participation and lifelong learning

GCU has in place a number of initiatives to support widening participation and lifelong learning, for example

- Community links and recruitment of students from non-traditional backgrounds
- Recruitment of adult returners to higher education
- Links with local FE colleges to ease FE/HE transitions for students
- Exploring the opportunities which could be offered to refugees and asylum seekers
- Flexible and e-learning initiatives for recruiting more part-time

¹ In 2005 SHEFC merged with the Scottish Further Education Funding Council to become the new Scottish Funding Council (SFC)

- students through developing distance and online learning routes
- A commitment to student learning through work placements and forging links with employers to create work-based learning programmes and contracts.

3.5 Research

The Centre for Research in Lifelong Learning (CRLI) is a joint initiative between Glasgow Caledonian University and the University of Stirling. The Centre came into existence on 1 August 1999 and was funded by the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council for the first three years; the centre is now self-funding.

The Centre undertakes research which deepens our understanding of the issues associated with lifelong learning and contributes to the development of future policy and provision. A number of targeted themes for research have been identified. They include

- Widening participation, social inclusion & inequality
- Work related and organisational learning
- Experiential and non-formal learning
- Policy studies

Details of current research projects, publications, news and events are available from the CRLI website.

3.6 Activities

- 1 In the GCU Equality and Diversity Policy how is the term discrimination defined?
- 2 How does the EOC define indirect discrimination?
- 3 In the CRE Education Code of Practice – Scotland, what does it say on admissions and exclusions?
- 4 Go into the Skill website and try the quiz DDA Part 4- how clued up are you? It can be found at http://www.skill.org.uk/dda_quiz/index.asp. There are some excellent and detailed comments and suggested answers too.
- 5 From the antidiscrimination website for the EU campaign 'For Diversity. Against Discrimination' look up the case studies from member states. The UK case studies are drawn from which area of antidiscriminatory practice?
- 6 From the ACAS website find the Employment Equality Regulations (2003) on religion or belief. Name the five unlawful practices identified in the Regulations.

- 7 Find the Teachability booklet 'Creating accessible information about courses or programmes of study for disabled students and applicants'. Look up the section on reflecting on tone from the legal point of view. How does the programme documentation in your school match up?
- 8 What happened in the two phases of the [ALLinclusive] campaign in 2004?
- 9 What does the GCU website say about study options open to students?
- 10 Under the PiD initiative identify the student entitlements and consider how these should or could be implemented in your programme or modules.
- 11 Out of the current CRLI projects which one is most relevant to your area of work?

3.7 Sources of information:

ACAS

[ALLinclusive]

Commission for Racial Equality

Centre for Research in Lifelong Learning

Equal Opportunities Commission

For Diversity. Against Discrimination

Glasgow Caledonian University

Partners in Delivery

Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities

Teachability

4 How can lecturers ensure they promote equality and diversity?

4.1 Equal opportunities

Both direct and indirect discrimination are unlawful. Direct discrimination is usually quite easy to identify and eliminate but indirect discrimination may be more difficult. Guidance is available from the EOC CRE websites on gender and race respectively. There are a number of projects on equality and/or diversity on the Higher Education Academy (HEA) website, some of them generic and others from specific subject areas. The QAA also has published Codes of Practice on Students with Disabilities and Recruitment and Admissions in higher education.

Regulations against discrimination on the grounds of age, religion or belief and sexual orientation primarily relate to employment practices. However, the GCU Equality and Diversity policy includes them for the whole university community.

4.2 Disability

The DDA and SENDA adopt a social model of disability ie while people may have impairments the environment, both attitudinal and physical, can be disabling so lecturers need to be proactive in managing the environment. It is unlawful to treat disabled people less favourably than other people for a reason related to their disability.

Organisations and individual lecturers also have to make reasonable adjustments for disabled students, such as providing extra help or making changes to the way they provide their services. Reasonable adjustments may be physical (eg extra time, space, a scribe) or electronic (eg provision of online materials, accessibility of websites). At national level information about e-learning, disability and accessibility is available from the TechDis website. In GCU the e-Learning Innovation Support Unit (e-LISU) has an online Quick Guide to Accessibility. Note that the university's website has an accessibility button at the top right hand corner of the page.

These issues are more fully explored in the Codes of Practice published by the DRC, QAA and the university. Methods of addressing the issues can be found in the Teachability Project. A key feature of the advice offered from the Teachability Project is that it starts from a position that good practice for students with impairments is often good practice for all students, although some reasonable adjustment may be required for students with disabilities. The SDT has produced a very useful guide on impact assessment for equal opportunities in higher education. Other projects on disability in higher education can be obtained from the HEA website.

Two more key concepts in relation to students with disabilities are disclosure and confidentiality. These issues have been addressed in guidance notes produced by the SDT.

4.3 Widening participation and lifelong learning

Students who enter GCU through widening participation and lifelong learning routes often have very specific support requirements. The work of the university's Learning Services is key to success in these areas eg:

- Summer School which is available to ensure that students have every opportunity to gain entry to GCU degree programmes and that they are suitably prepared for their studies.
- Effective Learning Service which aims to support all students in improving their learning skills by providing appropriately tailored support.
- Student Support services accessed through The Base on level 0 of the Saltire Centre eg disability service, funding advice, careers advice, childcare, counselling.

Lecturers should be aware of the range and sources of expertise and support available to our students.

4.4 Academic support

Many lecturers have responsibilities as Academic Advisers or Directors of Studies. In this capacity they should be able to discuss issues of equality and diversity with their students and refer them on to specialist support agencies in the university, if appropriate. There are many examples of projects on advice and/or guidance on the HEA website.

4.5 Activities

- 1 In the QAA Code of Practice on Recruitment and Admissions what general principles should be considered by each higher education institution?
- 2 What are the tips offered in the e-LISU Quick Guide on Accessibility?
- 3 What does the TechDis website have to say about supporting your role as a learning and teaching practitioner?
- 3 In the DRC Statutory Code of Practice for Scotland (2006) entitled "The Duty to Promote Disability Equality" Disability Equality Duty Code of Practice for consultation for Scotland, who is covered by the disability equality duty?

- 4 Find a booklet related to your current teaching and support of learning activities on the Teachability website. What are the implications for the way you carry out this role?
- 5 What does the SDT website have to say about Impact Assessments in an HE/FE setting?
- 6 Identify the range of student support services offered through Learning Services in GCU and investigate their functions.
- 7 In the GCU Code of Practice: Students with Disabilities what does it say about examination and assessment arrangements for disabled students?
- 8 From the HE Academy website, find a project in your subject area on an aspect of equality and diversity. What can you learn from this?

4.6 Sources of information:

[ALLinclusive]

Disability Rights Commission

e-Learning Innovation Support Unit

Higher Education Academy

Learning Services

Quality Assurance Agency

Scottish Disability Team

Teachability

TechDis

5 Professional development

Issues of equality and diversity are very complex and require a commitment from everyone in the university community at all levels from personal responsibility up to and including formulating, implementing and monitoring policies and procedures. Take some time to reflect on:

- Your current knowledge and awareness of the issues
- Your role in contributing to the achievement of the university's Equality and Diversity Strategy
- Your achievement of the professional values and standards as outlined in the HEA website.

5.1 Sources of information:

[AllInclusive]

Higher Education Academy

6 Where can I get more information?

A-Z of Equality and Diversity

<http://www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/guidancepublications/AZPRINT.pdf>

ACAS

<http://www.acas.org.uk/>

[AllInclusive]

<http://www.gcal.ac.uk/allinclusive/>

Commission for Racial Equality

<http://www.cre.gov.uk/>

Centre for Research in Lifelong Learning

<http://crl.gcal.ac.uk/>

Disability Rights Commission

<http://www.drc-gb.org/>

e-Learning Innovation Support Unit

<http://elisu.gcal.ac.uk/>

Equal Opportunities Commission

<http://www.eoc.org.uk/>

For Diversity. Against Discrimination

<http://www.stop-discrimination.info/99.0.html>

Higher Education Academy

<http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/>

Learner Support

<http://www.learningservices.gcal.ac.uk/divisions/learnersupport.html>

National Disability Team

<http://www.natdisteam.ac.uk/>

Partners in Delivery

<http://www.gcal.ac.uk/pid/>

Quality Assurance Agency

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/>

Scottish Disability Team

<http://www.sdt.ac.uk/>

Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities

<http://www.skill.org.uk/>

Teachability
<http://www.teachability.strath.ac.uk/>

TechDis
<http://www.techdis.ac.uk/>

Universities Scotland
<http://www.universities-scotland.ac.uk/>