

St Mary's University College

Updated Equality Action Plan

2022-2023

This document can also be made available on request in alternative formats including large print, in Braille, by email, on computer disc, on audio-cassette and in minority languages to meet the needs who are not fluent in English.

1. Structure of the Action Plan

This action plan has been produced in accordance with the commitments set out in St Mary's Equality Scheme and will be the subject of consultation. It is based on assessment by the College of those areas where outcomes could be improved in terms of our Section 75 responsibilities. The period of the Action Plan is aligned to the College's Institutional Plan for Sustainability: Strategy 21. Some of the actions relate to measures which are already in place and their continuation is expected to make a positive impact.

The action plan is available at [Equality of Opportunity \(smucb.ac.uk\)](https://www.smucb.ac.uk/equality)

2. Monitoring and Review of the Action Plan

Implementation of the Action Plan will be monitored by the Human Resources and Equality Steering Group on a quarterly basis. The Human Resources and Equality Steering Group will review the progress of implementing agreed actions together with consideration of any new actions in the intervening period. Where appropriate, the action plan will be revised to reflect any new developments, consultations, the outcome of any new Equality Impact Assessments or any additional information not previously available. The Human Resources Manager will report on progress in the Annual Equality Report to the Finance Committee. In addition, St Mary's will prepare an annual report on progress made over the previous year. This report will form part of the Annual Review of Progress on Section 75 implementation which is sent to the Equality Commission. This report will also be made available on the equality section of the College website.

The collation of information on progress will allow for regular and ongoing review of the initial action plan to ensure that it remains effective and relevant to St Mary's functions. Any changes to the action plan will be reported to the Equality Commission.

3. Copies of the Action Plan

If you require a hard copy of this document or an alternative format /language please contact the Human Resources Manager:

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Updated Equality Scheme Action Plan 2022-2023

Ref.	Action	Functional Area / Responsibility	Timescale	Measure of Success
1. Widen access and increase student diversity				
a.	<p>Develop and implement initiatives to maximise the diversity of the student population by focusing on the following groups through the Widening Access and Participation Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students from lower income families • Students with Disabilities • Students from Quintile 1 • Adult Learners • Young Males MDM Quintile 1 • Care leavers. <p>As part of its outreach work, St Mary's Widening Participation Team will directly engage with 20 selected schools/colleges across Northern Ireland in order to raise aspirations towards HE. At each school, they will offer information on HE and course choice, application support and/or interview skills training. Highlighted on these visits is the support available for students with disabilities or additional educational needs. In addition, St Mary's staff will attend specifically selected careers fairs in order to reach more students.</p>	The Widening Access and Participation Officer	Activities will occur throughout each academic year and be measured and reviewed annually by the Admissions Group, SMT and Board of Governors by November.	<p>Targets achieved below</p> <p>The proportion of applicants in each category and the composition of enrolled students will indicate whether outreach measures have an impact on student recruitment and retention.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 17% students from Quintile 1 10% newly enrolled students to have disclosed a disability 7% of all students to be in receipt of Disabled Student's Allowance 3.8% young males from MDM Quintile 1 10% adult learners enrolled 1% care leavers enrolled in undergraduate degree programmes

b.	Work with students who are disabled to consider the use of images and the potential for portraying a wider range of individuals when developing prospectus and information materials, including the website.	Marketing Manager	Ongoing but with a yearly progress report of the strategy targets and success measures by November.	A more diverse range of images in marketing material and information viewed by potential applicants and existing students to promote inclusivity and representation.
c.	Develop and increase the range of communications, social media and engagement tools used to interact with harder to reach schools and colleges to promote St Mary's courses.	Marketing Manager	By 2023	WAP targets achieved

Ref.	Action	Functional Area / Responsibility	Timescale	Measure of Success
2. Increase student retention				
a.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deal with all student issues in a proportionate, timely and appropriate manner and that follow-up is as prompt as thoroughness permits. • Operate an open-door policy to ensure maximum availability to the Student Support Offices in the interests of students' well-being. Respond to SSCC issues. • Take prompt action when reports are received expressing concern regarding a student's academic progress or pastoral well-being. • Organise a consultation event for incomplete students. • Provide a quality programme of induction and orientation for new students during Welcome Week. • Monitor attendance and act to support students in line with the appropriate policy. • Refer students to the College counsellor and/or the Careers' manager when deemed appropriate. • Work with students who are in danger of withdrawal to minimise drop-out rates and underachievement. • Ensure appropriate decisions are made and communicated, regarding the nature and extent of the support 	Student Guidance and Support Services led by the Coordinator of Student Guidance and Support	On-going throughout the year but evaluated by November of each academic year.	<p>Less than a 6% overall drop out rate</p> <p>Positive feedback from students. At least 90% satisfaction rate in National Student Survey.</p> <p>Zero student complaints.</p>

	<p>that is required to enable students to deal with temporary and permanent disability, including during the examination period.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather all relevant information on students' situations to be presented at the Exceptional Circumstances Committee. 			
3. Promote equality and increase diversity within the workforce				
Ref.	Action	Functional Area / Responsibility	Timescale	Measure of Success
a.	Implement Affirmative Action Plans and outreach measures to attract applicants from the Protestant community, people with disabilities and people from minority ethnic backgrounds	Human Resources led by the Human Resources Manager	Measures are on going and are reviewed annually when reporting to the Equality and HR Steering Group	<p>25% of applicants to come from the Protestant community</p> <p>Increasing the Protestant proportion of appointees for all posts to 15%</p> <p>At least 5% of applicants to job vacancies to have disclosed a disability</p> <p>At least 1% of applicants to job vacancies to come from a black and minority ethnic background</p>
b.	Monitor staff and applicants by gender, religion, disability, race, age and set goals to address any under-representation.	Human Resources	As above	<p>At least 10% of the workforce to have a Protestant community background.</p> <p>1% of the workforce to come from a black and ethnic minority background.</p>

c.	Encourage staff to declare that they have a disability through induction programme.	Human Resources Manager	2021 and every two years thereafter	Maintain high levels of participation in employment (10%) of staff with disabilities
d.	Undertake an equal pay audit in consultation with trade unions every two years and address any pay anomalies identified	Human Resources Manager	2023	Ensure any pay anomalies are not more or less than 5%. Close any gender pay gap that may arise.
e.	Continue to survey staff for their views on equality and diversity in employment	Human Resources Manager	2023	At least 80% staff satisfaction. Zero complaints
f.	Provide disability awareness workshops for staff to increase greater understanding of the challenges faced in studying and in employment and what reasonable changes might be considered.	Human Resources Manager with support of line managers	Periodically provide a range of workshops to create awareness on specific disabilities relevant to academic and support staff.	Workshops that are well attended by the staff Evaluation reports that rate workshop content and delivery as good or very good overall.
g.	Promote employment policies and initiatives designed to benefit staff health and wellbeing.	Human Resources Manager	Once per year and at induction/training events/appraisals where appropriate	Interest in and uptake of initiatives and benefits such as part time working or flexible working. Positive feedback in staff surveys.
h.	Develop guidance to address both managing and supporting staff and incoming trans-students	Human Resources Manager and Coordinator of Student Guidance and Support	2023	Greater confidence among St Mary's staff and managers of how to support transgendered students, staff and/or visitors.

4. Training

a.	Provide workshops and guidance on statutory policy screening for staff who have responsibility for developing policies / strategies.	Human Resources Manager	On commencement for new staff and every two years for existing staff, or sooner if the need arises.	Equality screening templates completed and attached to all new and revised policies in line with good practice. Evidence of policies screened in a bi-annual screening report available on the website.
b.	Increase staff and governor's awareness of equality and diversity policies and issues through attendance at workshops or by undertaking online workshops. Where possible, raise awareness of the barriers faced by linking with local or national awareness days.	Human Resources Manager and Human Resources Officer	Annually	Positive evaluations from staff and managers citing improved knowledge and confidence. All staff to have attended an induction workshop and undertaken a refresher equality workshop (online or in person) every two years.

