



HARTPURY

Equality, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Policy

APPROVAL & REVIEW CYCLE		
Policy Owner/Reviewer	Chief People Officer	February 2026
Approved By	Corporation	June 2026
Interim-Review	No	-
Next Review Date		February 2027

1. Purpose and Context

This Equality, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EEDIB) Policy sets out Hartpury College and University whole-provider approach to creating an inclusive, fair and high-quality learning and working environment in which every student and every member of staff belongs and can thrive.

This policy:

- Integrates the equality, diversity and inclusion policy together with the People Strategy commitments.
- Applies to students across further and higher education provision, and to staff, with implementation reflecting the differing regulatory, inspection and funding requirements of FE and HE.
- Aligns explicitly with the Ofsted Further Education and Skills Inspection Framework and Toolkit (for use from November 2025), including the standalone *Inclusion* evaluation area and its embedding across leadership, curriculum, achievement, participation, wellbeing and safeguarding.
- Meets statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and reflects wider education and employment legislation.

1.1 Hartpury's commitment to EEDIB

This is detailed in our headline objectives:

Empower our community to embrace equality

We are committed to ensuring that all members of our community are aware of their individual and collective responsibilities and legal duties in relation to EEDIB. We are committed to providing equality of opportunity and outcomes.

Celebrate and recognise the strength of diversity

We will increase our understanding of EEDIB and the challenges that our students and staff may face, nurturing, supporting and enabling them to flourish, thrive and succeed.

Promote an Inclusive Culture

We promote inclusive learning and working cultures, where everyone can thrive and flourish. This is the responsibility of all members of the Hartpury community and is demonstrated through actions and behaviours with the integration of EEDIB into initiatives and activities across Hartpury University and Hartpury College

Apply zero tolerance to all forms of harassment and discrimination

We enable an inclusive environment where everyone can feel inspired to make a difference and where bullying and harassment, discrimination and hate crime are challenged, reported and action taken in a timely way.

Hartpury will monitor impact through staff and student surveys, awareness raising events and networks, triangulating with other touch points of our quality processes to ensure effectiveness.

1.2 Who this Policy Applies To

This policy applies to all students, staff, governors, volunteers, contractors and visitors and is supported by detailed procedures, guidance and training.

Where appropriate and lawful, Hartpury may take positive action to address disadvantage or under-representation.

2. Our Commitment

At Hartpury, belonging is fundamental to learning, wellbeing and achievement. Rooted in our values of Excellence, Nurturing, Respectful, Ambitious and Empowering, we commit to:

- Creating a culture where difference is valued and barriers to participation and success are actively identified and removed.
- Ensuring students with additional needs, disadvantages or vulnerability are identified early and supported effectively, including those experiencing temporary or fluctuating barriers.
- Promoting equity by providing proportionate and targeted support based on need, recognising that fair outcomes do not always require identical treatment.
- Supporting staff to thrive in an inclusive workplace culture where wellbeing, respect and equity are actively promoted.
- Challenging and addressing discrimination, harassment and victimisation in all forms.
- Using evidence, insight and data to reduce gaps in participation, achievement, progression and experience.

“Everyone belongs. Everyone matters. Everyone has the opportunity to succeed.”

3. Policy Alignment with Ofsted 2025 Framework

This policy is designed to evidence strong practice against the Ofsted 2025 College evaluation areas, particularly:

- Students’ needs are accurately identified and met, particularly for:
 - students with SEND or learning differences
 - disadvantaged students (including Free School Meals, care-experienced, estranged, refugees)
 - students facing temporary or fluctuating vulnerability or wellbeing barriers
- Systems prioritise impact and lived experience over process, and inclusion is visible in everyday practice.
- Equality and inclusion data is used lawfully and proportionately to understand experience, identify gaps and improve outcomes.
- Expectations for inclusive practice apply equally to employers, placement providers and partners, who are required to provide safe, inclusive environments aligned with this policy.

4. Legal and Regulatory Framework

This policy complies with:

- Equality Act 2010 (including protected characteristics and reasonable adjustments)

- Public Sector Equality Duty (s149 Equality Act 2010)
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Education Inspection Framework (EIF) 2025 (FE)
- SEND Code of Practice (where applicable)
- Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023
- The Higher Education (Access and Participation Plans) (England) Regulations 2018
- Office for Students guidance (HE)

Freedom of speech and academic freedom are upheld through separate, dedicated policies and procedures.

Inclusive and equitable practice applies to recruitment, admissions, progression, assessment, employment and promotion. The Hartpury University Access and Participation Plan¹ sets out how we will achieve this.

This policy supports the promotion of British Values and aligns with the Prevent duty to safeguard students from radicalisation and extremism

5. Definitions: Equality, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging

- **Equality:** Ensuring fair access, opportunity and treatment for all.
- **Equity:** Recognising different starting points and providing the support required to achieve comparable outcomes.
- **Diversity:** Valuing difference in identity, background, experience and perspective.
- **Inclusion:** Proactively removing barriers and creating environments where everyone feels they belong and can fully participate.
- **Belonging:** Fostering a sense of connection and acceptance so that everyone feels they are an integral part of the community.

6. Scope and Protected Characteristics

This policy protects against discrimination related to: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

Hartpury also recognises: socio-economic disadvantage, SEND, mental health, care experience, young carers, estrangement and prior educational disruption as factors that can create barriers and require inclusive, responsive support.

The Equality Act 2010 introduces the term 'protected characteristic' to refer to aspects of a person's identity explicitly protected from unlawful discrimination. Nine are identified:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity

¹ [hartpury-university_app_2025-26_approved_10080811.pdf](#)

- Race – (includes race, colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins)
- Religion or belief including philosophical belief and a lack of belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

However, other aspects of a person's identity, background or circumstance can cause them to experience discrimination, for example a person's socio-economic status, class or background. Hartpury is committed to advancing equality and eliminating discrimination on these and other grounds.

The Equality Act 2010 recognises the following types of discrimination:

- Direct discrimination, including associative and perception discrimination
- Indirect discrimination
- Harassment
- Victimisation
- Discrimination arising from a disability

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsible for
All Staff	• Participate in relevant equality, diversity, and inclusion training for pedagogic practice, and to develop understanding of protected characteristics legislation and how to apply this policy in practice. • Contribute to an inclusive and respectful culture where staff, students, and external stakeholders are treated with dignity and supported to thrive. • Uphold inclusive behaviours and high standards by working respectfully with staff, students, customers, and other stakeholders by challenging and reporting discrimination where appropriate. • Teaching and learning staff will deliver materials to students which promote inclusion and accessibility, avoid stereotyping or discrimination and enhance the understanding of equality and diversity. • Utilise feedback from the student voice. • Facilitate early identification of student needs, using available data and transition information. • Ensure students are aware of EDI policies, understand how to report discrimination, harassment, or bullying, and are confident that reporting concerns will not result in victimisation.
Manager	• Lead by example by treating all members of Hartpury with dignity and respect, fostering inclusive teams and learning environments, and appropriately challenging unacceptable or discriminatory behaviour. • Ensure all employees are aware of EDI policies and understand how to use appropriate reporting processes in relation to wellbeing concerns, discrimination, harassment, or bullying. • Support staff to be confident that reporting concerns will not result in victimisation. • Early identification of employee needs and ensure reasonable adjustments and appropriate support are implemented effectively.

	• Facilitate high-needs and disadvantage monitoring. • Handle complaints fairly, thoroughly, promptly, and confidentially. • Create and maintain a positive and inclusive environment that enables staff and students to flourish and thrive. • Ensure all procedures and policies are consistently adhered to. • Use data, insight, and feedback to identify barriers, inform decision-making, and drive continuous improvement.
Human Resources	• Will ensure that procedures for the recruitment and promotion of staff encompass best practice at all times, irrespective of who they are within equal opportunities legislative requirements. • Monitor and act on employee protected characteristic data. • Provide equality and diversity training for staff. • Promote and review Employee Assistance Programme.
Students	• Adhere to the Student Charter and Code of Conduct. • Treat others with dignity and respect, engaging positively in learning and community life. • Challenge and/or report unacceptable or discriminatory behaviour where it is appropriate and safe to do so. • Engage in equality, diversity, and inclusion development and training opportunities. • Raise concerns or barriers to participation, confident that they will be listened to and taken seriously.
EDI Forum	• Ensure the EEDI action plan is revised annually and all actions monitored. • Oversight of EEDI task and finish groups to determine impact. • Oversight of EEDI celebration events.
Senior Leadership and Governance	• Undertake relevant equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging training to support effective leadership, oversight, and compliance. • Maintain strategic oversight of EEDIB outcomes for students and staff, ensuring performance is monitored, evaluated, and addressed. • Ensure alignment with organisational strategy, risk management frameworks, quality assurance systems, and regulatory requirements. • Provide assurance to governing bodies on the effectiveness and impact of EEDIB practice. • Champion a culture of inclusion, accountability, and continuous improvement across the organisation.

8. EDI-related Complaints, Reporting and Monitoring

- Discrimination, harassment or exclusionary behaviour can be reported via line managers, safeguarding, HR or student support routes.
- Separate procedures exist for staff and students to ensure concerns are handled fairly, appropriately and without detriment.
- Inclusion data, complaints and feedback are monitored through quality, safeguarding and governance cycles.
- Training completion, impact and application in practice are monitored through appraisal, observation and quality assurance processes.

9. Related Policies and Procedures

Strategy, Inclusion & Quality	• Hartpury Inclusivity Scheme 2025–2030 • People Strategy and Wellbeing Framework • College Inclusion Operating Procedures • College Quality Cycle and Audit Schedule
Safeguarding, Safety & Freedom of Expression	• Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy • Sexual Misconduct Policy • Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom Policy • Whistleblowing Policy (Staff)
Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Wellbeing	• Gender Identity Policy • Harassment and Bullying Policy (Staff) • Health and Wellbeing Policy (Staff) • Student Disability Policy (FE) / Disability and Access Policy (HE) • Additional Learning Support Procedures
Students – Behaviour, Conduct & Discipline	• Student Charter (University students) • Student Code of Conduct (College students) • Academic Behaviour Management Policy (College students) • Non-Academic Behaviour Management Policy (College students) • University Disciplinary Policy (University students)
Admissions & Complaints	• Student Admissions Policy (College students) • Admissions and Recruitment Policies • Complaints Procedure • HE Student Complaints
Staff Policies (People Management)	• Grievance Policy (Staff) • Disciplinary and Dismissal Policy and Procedure (Staff) • Recruitment and Selection Policy (Staff) • Flexible Working Policy (Staff) • Annual leave policy (Staff)

10. Review and Accountability

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure:

- Continued alignment with legislation and regulatory requirements
- Responsiveness to Ofsted and Office for Students framework updates
- Ongoing reduction of gaps in participation, experience and outcomes

Freedom of Speech

As part of this policy, Hartpury reaffirms its commitment to the principles of freedom of speech and academic freedom, in accordance with the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023 and guidance from the Office for Students (OfS). Hartpury will take all reasonably practicable steps to secure the right to express lawful views and engage in open debate without fear of censorship or institutional discipline for staff, students, and visiting speakers. In addition, this policy prohibits the use of non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) in

any situation that would prevent staff from speaking out about misconduct, harassment, or other matters of public interest.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

As with all Hartpury policies and procedures, due care has been taken to ensure that this policy is appropriate to all members of staff and students regardless of their age, disability, ethnicity, gender, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation and transgender status.

The policy will be applied fairly and consistently whilst upholding Hartpury's commitment to providing equality to all. If any employee or student feels that this or any other policy does not meet this aim, please contact the HR Department (staff) or an academic tutor (student).

Hartpury is committed towards promoting positive mental health by working towards the MINDFUL EMPLOYER Charter, holds the Student Minds University Mental Health accreditation and has signed the AoC Mental Charter. Hartpury aims to create a culture of support within the workplace where employees can talk about mental health problems without the fear of stigma or discrimination.