

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Aims and Values

Lindisfarne College of Theology (LCT) recognises its responsibility under the Equality Act 2010 to promote equal opportunities for all. The College is committed to building and supporting a diverse and inclusive community so that all who work or study at the institution can benefit from an environment which is open and inclusive, and which values everyone equally.

LCT recognises that staff, students, and visitors will benefit from drawing on a wide range of skills and experience from a variety of cultures and backgrounds. Staff, and students will benefit from working and learning in an environment which is open and inclusive, that allows them to contribute fully and effectively.

LCT believes that Equality, Diversity and Inclusion should permeate every aspect of its life. It actively promotes equality of opportunity regardless of such characteristics as age, disability, gender, gender identity, race, religion* or belief, sexual orientation and socio-economic background. Discrimination, whether direct or indirect is not an acceptable behaviour in any staff, volunteer, student, or any other person associated with the Foundation.

* In some instances, where a Genuine Occupational Requirement exists, LCT may seek to appoint teaching staff on the basis of their Christian affiliation.

This Policy has been approved by the Board of Trustees of the College. Implementation of this Policy and the practice of its provisions will be overseen by the Principal. It is managed by the Director of Business and Finance for the staff and the Directors of Studies for the students.

Guiding Principles

LCT is part of the Common Awards, which is 'a partnership shaped and enriched by inclusion and diversity' and 'is made up of multiple independent Theological Education Institutes (TEIs) that train people from various denominations for different roles through numerous models of learning and education.'¹ We are committed to the theological principles that undergird Common Awards:

We are being conformed to Christ in this way not as isolated individuals but together, as the Spirit unites us into the one Body of Christ. As members of that Body, we participate together in God's mission in the world. The work to which we are called is therefore the work of Christ, and the work of every member of Christ's Body together; it is the work of all the baptised, of all God's people. The Spirit calls and empowers each person to participate in

¹ <https://www.durham.ac.uk/media/durham-university/departments-/common-awards/documents/pdfs/Diversity-and-Inclusion-Strategy.pdf>

this shared work differently, by giving each one diverse gifts to bring to the shared life of the Body in the world, each one a manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.²

As such, LCT seeks to embrace equality, diversity and inclusion in all of the various learning journeys that our students take. This will therefore be much more than just meeting legal obligations; it is about making a difference to the lives of the people involved in the life of the organisation, treating all people with dignity and respect and recognising the value of each individual. LCT has an absolute commitment to the success and general welfare of all its students, employees and users.

LCT regards this Policy as part of its attempt to respond faithfully to the call of the prophet Micah: 'Do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with your God' (Micah 6:8). The College does so in the context of three contemporary and critical callings from God:

- Respect for the diversity of God's people.
- Deconstruct Racism in the Church.
- Live faithfully in the face of the environmental crisis facing our planet.

Two of these have been in the spotlight through major reports in the Church of England and the latter has encouraged an ambition agenda for change.³ The third is the focus of an ambitious programme leading Net Zero Carbon in the Church by 2030.⁴

Definitions ⁵

The Common Awards Strategy Paper includes the following definitions of the key terms:

- **Inclusion** is to foster a learning environment that allows and enables people with different backgrounds, characteristics, abilities, opinions, and ways of thinking, to work together, grow together, and flourish.
- **Diversity** is to recognise, respect and value the differences and the gifts that everyone has, and to embrace them in their fullest.
- **Belonging** is to go beyond the politicalised necessity of inclusion and to be truly embraced, appreciated and empowered.⁶

² A Vision for Theological Education in the Common Awards (2016), <https://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/theology.religion/common.awards/CATheologicalVision.pdf> p. 4 (accessed 19 Nov 2019).

³ *Living in Love and Faith* (Church of England Report, Nov 2020); and *From Lament to Action* (Church of England Report, April 2021). Both reports are available on line at <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/living-love-and-faith> and at <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2021-04/FromLamentToAction-report.pdf>

⁴ See <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/church-england-environment-programme>

⁵ Source Queens Foundation EDI Policy: <https://www.queens.ac.uk/uploads/policies/Equality-Diversity-and-inclusion-Policy-Nov-2022.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.durham.ac.uk/media/durham-university/departments-/common-awards/documents/pdfs/Diversity-and-Inclusion-Strategy.pdf>

Definitions and information regarding the protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation) can be found at Appendix 1. Here LCT wants to make clear what is meant by other key terms:

Discrimination:

1. **Direct discrimination** is where a person is treated less favourably than others (in the same or similar circumstances) due to a protected characteristic.
2. **Indirect discrimination** is when a condition or requirement adversely affects one particular group considerably more than other groups, and which cannot be justified in terms of the requirements for performing the job.
3. **Discrimination by perception** is where a person is directly discriminated against based on a perception that they have a particular protected characteristic, even if that is not the case.
4. **Discrimination by association** is where a person is directly discriminated against because of their association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.

Victimisation. It is unlawful to victimise individuals who have made allegations or complaints of discrimination, or who have provided information about cases of discrimination. LCT will treat any proven act of equality-related victimisation as a serious disciplinary matter.

Harassment is unwarranted, unwelcome, or uninvited behaviour which is intimidating, degrading, offensive or distressing to the recipient, and which is motivated or related to a protected characteristic.

A simple ACAS guide regarding Equality, Diversity and Inclusion can be found at Appendix 2. This will also be displayed on noticeboards.

Practices

LCT will:

- form a Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Group (DI-AG) to drive and encourage change that will promote good practice within the College. This will offer support to the Principal and Core Staff in respect of initiatives on diversity and inclusion as well as monitoring and making sure that progress is being made.
- ensure that all staff, trustees and students are aware of LCT's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy;
- ensure that all members of its community have equal access to the facilities and services it provides and will ensure that all members of the LCT community are equally valued;
- strive to combat discriminatory practices and stereotyping;
- ensure that individuals are aware of objective criteria for making decisions about equality, diversity and inclusion;
- strive to prevent oppressive behaviour including all forms of harassment;
- work to identify any practice adjustments that will enhance the experience of any member of the LCT community who has a disability, including anyone who is newly disabled;
- recognise and value diversity.

Leadership and Management

Opportunities to help all staff, trustees and students to understand LCT's expectations and their own responsibilities will be provided annually.

The trustees are responsible for:

- Ensuring that the organisation stays within the Policy and other relevant legislation, and meets all of its duties, monitoring and reviewing the outworking of the Policy on an annual basis.
- Making sure that the Policy and its procedures are followed.

The Principal is responsible for:

- Giving a consistent lead on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion issues.
- Promoting the Policy.
- Ensuring that all staff are familiar with and observe the Policy.
- Following the relevant procedures and taking any necessary action where staff or students have behaved in a way which goes against LCT's aims and values.
- Making sure that the Policy and its procedures are followed.

All staff and students are responsible for:

- Promoting equality, diversity and inclusion; and avoiding behaving in a way which goes against LCT's aims and values.
- Participating in training and learning opportunities as appropriate.

Complaints (principally for students)

LCT will ensure that any individual or group of members who wish to make a complaint are properly represented in any complaints' proceedings. Any member who feels that he/she has been treated unfairly in connection with his/her involvement in the Course or Scheme should raise the matter through the Complaints Procedure as outlined in the LCT Complaints Policy, when every effort will be made to secure a satisfactory resolution. In addition, LCT will ensure that any member making a complaint (or any member assisting or representing them) will be protected from any victimisation.

Grievance and Discipline (principally for staff and others)

Unfair discrimination and harassment are incompatible with good education practice and will be dealt with under LCT's Grievance and Disciplinary procedures.

LCT will ensure that any individual or group of members who believe that they have experienced direct or indirect unfair discrimination or harassment are properly represented in any grievance proceedings. Any member who feels that he/she has been treated unfairly in connection with his/her involvement in the Course or Scheme should raise the grievance through the Grievance Procedure as outlined in the LCT Grievance and Discipline Policy, when every effort will be made to

secure a satisfactory resolution. In addition, LCT will ensure that any member making a complaint of unfair discrimination (or any member assisting or representing them) will be protected from any victimisation.

Advertising of Posts and Places

All employees and applicants for jobs will be considered on their abilities and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of age, caring responsibilities, disability, employment status, gender, gender identity, marital status, nationality, race or ethnic origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, socio-economic status or any other irrelevant distinction.

When posts and places are advertised both internally and externally, LCT will ensure that such advertising, both in placement and content, is compatible with the terms of this Policy. The wording of advertisements and notices will be carefully scrutinised to ensure that any hidden discrimination is avoided and that sexually, racially, or disability loaded wording is avoided.

Other Related Policies and Procedures

Admissions and APL Policy

Academic Misconduct Policy

Complaints and Appeals Policy

Data Protection Policy

Policy on Support for SpLD students

Respect at Work and Study Policy

Staff Handbook

Student Disciplinary Procedure

Student Handbook

Health and Safety Policy

Research Ethics Policy

Safeguarding Policy

15 November 2023

Appendix 1: Protected Characteristics (based on ACAS sources)⁷

In almost all cases, the characteristics below are protected under the Equality Act 2010. However, there are some exceptions, known as genuine occupational requirements, where restrictions are necessary. Any potentially discriminatory occupational requirements must be:

- Crucial to the post, and for good business reasons.
- Related to the nature of the job not the culture of the organisation.
- A proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- Applied in a way that is appropriate, necessary, fair, and reasonable.

The employer should be able to show that there is no other way to achieve the same aim which would be less discriminatory.

Age

The Act provides protection for people of any age.

Disability

A person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

- Long-term means lasting at least a year, or likely to be for the rest of a person's life or recur.
- Substantial adverse effect means more than minor but it may fluctuate or change, and may not be present all the time.
- Employers have a duty to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that staff and applicants are not substantially disadvantaged in carrying out or applying for a job because of a disability when compared with people who do not have a disability.
- In making reasonable adjustments, employers can treat disabled employees more favourably than non-disabled employees because of their disability, and non-disabled employees cannot claim discrimination on the grounds that they are treated less favourably.

Gender reassignment

A person has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment if they are proposing to undergo or have undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning their gender by changing physiological or other attributes of gender.

- An individual does not have to be under medical supervision to be protected.
- Non-binary and gender fluid people are also protected.

⁷ Based on information from <https://www.acas.org.uk/discrimination-and-the-law>

Marriage or civil partnership

The Act protects people who are married or in civil partnership. Single people and couples in relationships which are not legally recognised are not protected.

Pregnancy and maternity

Women are protected against discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity during the period of their pregnancy and any maternity leave to which they are entitled.

Race

This protection includes discrimination on grounds including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origin.

Religion or belief

People are protected from discrimination on the grounds of their religion or belief, and also if they do not have a particular religion or belief.

- Religion includes any religion which has a clear structure and belief system
- A belief covers any religious or philosophical belief which has a high level of cogency, cohesion, and importance, and has a weighty and substantial effect on a person's day-to-day life and behaviour.

Sex

The Act provides protection against any form of discrimination on grounds of sex.

Sexual orientation

The Act provides protection against any form of discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation.

Appendix 2: Equality diversity and inclusion⁸

What they are

A workplace encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion can help:

- make it more successful
- keep employees happy and motivated
- prevent serious or legal issues arising, such as bullying, harassment and discrimination to better serve a diverse range of customers
- improve ideas and problem-solving
- attract and keep good staff

Equality

Equality in the workplace means equal job opportunities and fairness for employees and job applicants.

You must not treat people unfairly because of reasons protected by discrimination law ('protected characteristics'). For example, because of sex, age or race.

Find out more:

- [discrimination and the Equality Act 2010](#)
- [preventing discrimination](#)

Diversity

Diversity is the range of people in your workforce. For example, this might mean people with different ages, religions, ethnicities, people with disabilities, and both men and women. It also means valuing those differences.

To avoid bullying, harassment or discrimination, you should make sure:

- your workforce and managers understand what is protected by discrimination law
- what's expected under discrimination law is actually happening in your workplace
- you make changes if what's expected is not happening, for example stepping up staff training
- your workforce and managers understand what the benefits can be of having a range of people with different backgrounds

Inclusion

An inclusive workplace means everyone feels valued at work. It lets all employees feel safe to:

⁸ <https://www.acas.org.uk/improving-equality-diversity-and-inclusion>

- come up with different ideas
- raise issues and suggestions to managers, knowing this is encouraged
- try doing things differently to how they've been done before, with management approval

An inclusive workplace can help lower the risk of bullying, harassment and discrimination.