Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

Policy Details	
Policy Owner	Vice Principal Quality and Learner Journey
Date produced	September 2026
Approved by	Policies & Procedures Committee, Quality Committee, Corporation Board
Date approved	October 2026
To be reviewed	Annually
Publication	MyUSP, USP College Website

1. Statement of Intent

1.1 USP College is committed to promoting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion through all its activities including the delivery of high-quality teaching, learning and assessment. It believes in promoting equality of opportunity, access, dignity and fairness.

1.2 The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy reflects the Equality Act 2010, which consolidated much of the law on discrimination and sets out the Public Sector Equality Duty.

1.3 The Human Rights Act 1998 remains separate legislation and was not replaced by the Equality Act 2010.

1.4 The Equality Diversity & Inclusion Policy covers all staff, current students, prospective students and contractors.

2. Public Sector Equality Duty

2.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty is set out in section 149 of the Act. The Public Sector Equality Duty is a duty on public bodies and other organisations carrying out public functions.

2.2 It ensures that public bodies consider the needs of all individuals in their day-to-day work in shaping policy, in delivering services, and in relation to their own employees.

2.3 The Public Sector Equality Duty supports good decision making – it encourages public bodies to understand how different people will be affected by their activities so that policies and services are appropriate and accessible to all and meet different people's needs.

2.4 The College publishes and maintains an accessibility statement for its website in accordance with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.

3. The Public Sector Equality Duty Aims

3.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty has three aims;

a. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

i. **Eliminate unlawful discrimination**, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act.

ii. **Advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

iii. **Foster good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

b. Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity involves considering the need to:

i. Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.

ii. Meet the needs of people with protected characteristics.

iii. Encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is low.

3.2 Fostering good relations involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people who share a **protected characteristic** and others.

4. Protected Characteristics and Equality Objectives

4.1 The College publishes information demonstrating its compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty at least annually and publishes one or more equality objectives at least every four years. Progress against the objectives is reported annually to the Corporation Board and published on the College website.

4.2 The Equality Act 2010 (also known as the Act) states the individual characteristics which are protected by law:

a. Age
b. Disability
c. Gender reassignment
d. Pregnancy and maternity
e. Race - this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality
f. Religion or belief
g. Sex
h. Sexual orientation
i. Marriage and civil partnership (only in respect of the requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination).

4.3 The Equality Act 2010 requires reasonable adjustments for disabled students, prospective students and staff where applicable. The College considers individual needs and may provide different support to remove barriers. This may involve:

a. Providing additional time for examinations or classroom support
b. Accessibility settings on the College website
c. Additional support for adult students with lower levels of IT proficiency

4.4 The implementation of the Equality Act (2010) also explicitly recognises that disabled people's needs may be different from those of non-disabled people. Public bodies should therefore take account of disabled people's impairments when making decisions about policies or services. This might mean making reasonable adjustments or treating disabled people differently than nondisabled people in order to meet their needs

4.5 The socio-economic background of an individual is not one of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. However, within the educational environment the College considers this when guiding and supporting students through their time at the College. Where students are from an area of high deprivation or in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM), they may have low prior educational attainment and lower expectations which may influence negatively on their achievement.

4.6 Where College student or staff performance data indicates any groups are underperforming then every action will be taken to address this.

5. Implementing the Public Sector Equality Duty

5.1 The College embeds the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty as part of the process of decision-making and implementation. This particularly applies to carrying out Equality Impact Assessments.

5.2 The College ensures that the following principles are followed:

a. **Knowledge -** those who work within all areas of the College need to be aware of the requirements of the Equality Duty and approach decision making with the Equality Duty in mind

b. **Timeliness** - The College ensures that the Equality Duty is complied with at the time that a particular policy is under consideration or decision is taken

c. **Real Consideration** - The College considers the three aims of the Equality Duty and ensures that they form an integral part of the decision-making process. It recognises that the Equality Duty is not a matter of box-ticking but that it is approached with rigour and with an open mind

d. **Sufficient Information** - The College supports staff making decisions to consider what information he or she has and what further information may be needed in order to give proper consideration to the Equality Duty

e. **Accountability -** Where third parties exercise functions on the College's behalf, the College sets expectations for compliance with applicable equality duties and retains responsibility for its own Public Sector Equality Duty.

f. **Review** - The College ensures that the aims of the Equality Duty are applied not only when a policy is developed and decided upon, but also when it is implemented and reviewed.

6 How does USP College implement the Public Sector Equality Duty?

a. Promoting equality of opportunity for all

b. Elimination of unlawful discrimination for students, staff and other stakeholders using Equality Assessment when reviewing policies, procedures and practices in every aspect of College business but predominantly:

   i. Curriculum

   ii. Support Services

   iii. Human Resources.

c. Providing a high quality training programme that informs staff and students of the requirements of the Equality Act, develops the principles of British Values, fosters good relations and promotes positive attitudes through high expectation of behaviours.

d. Ensuring that all facilities, materials, products and services are accessible to staff, students, visitors and other stakeholders.

e. Promoting a culture of appreciating diversity and difference in our student body and workforce, including Learner Voice activities, staff forum and representation on key committees including Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer/Questioning (LGBTQIA+) group, Black Lives Matter & Diversity Forum and the chaplaincy.

f. Teaching, learning and assessment fully integrates diversity, inclusion and equality of opportunity to promote a positive culture of understanding of the diverse world in which students and staff are part of.

g. Ensure that Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is fully integrated into recruitment processes at all stages and that all applicants and staff feel treated fairly and valued at the College.

h. The College has an established Equality & Diversity Committee and they will report on equality matters for both staff and students to the Senior Management Team (SMT). The College's quality systems and procedures are also designed to report and highlight any performance differences between different groups of students.

i. The annual College Self-Assessment and Quality Improvement Plan will support improvement activities.

j. The Safeguarding & PREVENT Policy takes account of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Concerns about bullying, discrimination and harassment, including child-on-child abuse, are taken seriously and handled under the relevant safeguarding, behaviour or complaints procedures, in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

k. The College is committed to promoting healthy relationships and respect. Sexual violence, sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Staff and students receive relevant training and education through induction and tutorial, and concerns are reported and responded to under the College's safeguarding procedures.

l. The college will provide the following Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training:

- Annual training/updates to Governors.
- Student induction and tutorial
- New staff induction and bi-annually for all staff

7 Structure, Roles and Responsibilities at USP College

7.1 The College has an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, which includes a cross section of staff from across the College. The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee considers issues related to staff and to students with Human Resources taking overall responsibility for staff Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Student Services taking responsibility for students.

7.2 The College implements action plans to ensure that the principles of the Public Sector Equality Duty are monitored regularly through the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee as a result of the annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion report.

7.3 The College Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee is co-chaired by a member of SMT and they provide a report at the SMT meeting.

7.4 The Corporation has the statutory responsibility for fulfilling the requirements of the Equality Act (2010) which includes the Public Sector Equality Duty. This means they will:

- approve and monitor equality objectives published at least every four years
- receive an annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion report which will identify issues and track performance improvement on key priorities
- publish information demonstrating compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty annually, including the annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion report
- Monitor the completion of Equality Impact Assessment

7.5 The Senior Management Team will fully align Equality Diversity and Inclusion into all aspects of their work and will receive regular reports on the progress made on Equality objectives

and data on the performance outcomes of staff and students. They will take appropriate action where differences in outcomes are identified.

7.6 All staff respective of their roles and contractual status (including agency staff) are expected to promote Equality, Diversity and Inclusion throughout their work and to fulfil the expectations set out in this policy

7.7 All students are expected to promote Equality, Diversity and Inclusion throughout their time at the college. The college will ensure opportunities for students to discuss and celebrate diversity and difference in the modern world.

7.8 Any breach of the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy will not be tolerated. Breaches of responsibilities will be dealt with through established disciplinary policies for staff and students.

7.9 The Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy will be monitored and reviewed annually.

8 Equality Impact Assessments

8.1 The College is committed to considering and addressing the potential effects of its policies, procedures and practices on groups of students and staff, with specific reference to protected characteristics.

8.2 The College will annually review and report on the following, providing both qualitative and quantitative data to ensure that no groups of students or staff are disadvantaged and where there are any differences in performance or any negative impacts the College will identify the action taken to address that impact.

a. Student recruitment profile
b. Student achievement including pass rates and retention rates
c. Intersectional analysis (examining how multiple protected characteristics interact)
d. Value-added metrics for different student groups
e. Progression and destination data analysis by protected characteristic
f. Learner voice (across College and specific focus groups)
g. Student complaints
h. Student disciplinaries
i. Staff recruitment profile
j. Staff complaints
k. Staff disciplinaries
l. Staff survey

8.3 An appropriately competent member of staff, in accordance with the policy list, reviews all policies and procedures annually. The staff writing or reviewing policies are required to consider the impact of the policy or procedure on different groups of staff and students. Policies are approved by a member of the Senior Management Team to ensure their compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty.