E15. Race Equality Policy

Background:

1. The Race Relations Act 1976, as amended by the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000, places a general duty on all institutions of higher education to promote race equality throughout its operations and activities. Oxford Brookes welcomes this statutory duty as it reflects the spirit in which it has sought to handle all aspects of its employment and educational policies for many years. The general duties laid down by the Act are intended to promote:

   - genuine equality of opportunity between ethnic groups
   - the elimination of unlawful racial discrimination
   - positive relationships between employees, students and others, regardless of racial and ethnic background
   - These duties cover all aspects of the life and work of the University, and our policy document deals with both the University's role as an employer, and as an institution of teaching, learning and research.

2. The University's Human Resources Strategy incorporates a set of general principles for the achievement of equal opportunities in employment based on:

   - fair, open and transparent procedures
   - criterion-based employment practices
   - regular assessment of performance
   - open communication and regular consultation with employees
   - a training and awareness programme
   - annual personal performance and development reviews

   These principles also underpin the University's commitment to the promotion of racial equality in the performance of its educational mission, in the design and delivery of the curriculum, and in the recruitment, education and assessment of students. The mission statement for Oxford Brookes notes that the University aims to contribute to the intellectual, social and economic development of the communities it serves through teaching, research and enterprise of the highest standards. In the conduct of its work, Oxford Brookes University seeks to uphold the following values: Excellence, Innovation, Enterprise, Equality and Social Responsibility. Tackling race discrimination and promoting race equality is therefore core to the University.

3. The University's Policy on Equal Opportunities for Students has been in operation since November 1997. It was formulated by a working group following extensive consultation with staff, students and trade unions. It embodies principles and practices which prohibit unfair discrimination on the
basis of race, ethnic origin and other characteristics, and promotes equality in the operation and delivery of academic programmes and services to students.

Policy statement on race equality:

4. Statement of Principle:
The University is committed to tackling all forms of racial and ethnic discrimination which may arise from the exercise of its employment and teaching functions. It is committed to positively promoting equality of employment opportunity and good relations between employees from different racial and/or ethnic backgrounds. The University will make every endeavour to establish policies and practices that will secure the objectives of the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 and the related Code of Practice.

5. Scope of Policy:
The University will endeavour to ensure that the following areas and activities promote equality of opportunity and good race relations, in addition to the commitments made in the Equal Opportunities Policies for both Employees and Students.

- admissions and access for students
  - In its recruitment and admissions process, the University will seek the widest possible response across regional, national and international communities
  - Promotional material about courses and programmes of study will include positive written information and visual images will reflect a diverse student population
  - The university will develop a system for recording the factors that were taken into account in making offers to, or rejecting candidates

- student achievement and assessment
  - The University requires clear learning outcomes and assessment criteria to be specified for all taught modules and courses in order to provide a framework for fair assessment. All programmes of study are required to make use of an appropriate range of assessment methods to give students opportunities to demonstrate their achievement of learning outcomes
  - Each school is required to ensure that each taught programme of study has a system for moderating the marking of the coursework and examinations to ensure reliability and consistency. This system will be related to assessment criteria and it will be communicated to the students

- guidance and support for students
  - Equal opportunities underpin all areas of the University's activities and, accordingly, the University makes resources such as time, people, money and space available as far as possible to facilitate equality of opportunity
The University's current policy is to allocate residential halls on the basis of the geographical location of the student's permanent home. All students who are not allocated a hall place are provided with help in securing local accommodation. The impact of this policy on different student groups will be kept under review.

- **teaching and learning**
  - The University aims to ensure that documents associated with programmes of study such as student handbooks, field guides, teaching material and examination papers reflect the principles of equal opportunity, and that a diverse range of case histories, illustrative examples and models are used. Appropriate University support departments will assist schools in the development, cataloguing and dissemination of examples of good practice.
  - The University encourages staff and students to use language that is non-discriminatory and inclusive, and which does not cause offence to particular groups. (Guidance of the use of language is available in support of this policy objective)

- **the curriculum**
  - The University aims to provide programmes of study and perspectives that recognise and value the diverse needs, interests and backgrounds of all students.
  - The University is sensitive to the needs of individual students. In particular, the way courses are organised, delivered and examined takes account of the needs of those with cultural and religious commitments. Where it is not possible to organise part of a course in such a way that a student can fully participate, consideration will be given to the provision of alternative learning methods or other reasonable adjustments.

- **staff recruitment and development**
  - The University is committed to the recruiting, developing and promoting its employees without regard to race, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origin (or any other factor as outlined in the University's Equal Opportunity Policy).

- **partnerships and community links**
  - The University also recognises that it is bound by the General Duty established by the Act to secure race equality throughout its many partnership activities, insofar as they affect employment or education in the United Kingdom, and will seek to apply the same policies and standards to those partnerships as it does to its core activities.

- **quality assurance**
  - The University's quality assurance processes, including periodic quality audit are used to monitor and evaluate the extent to which equal opportunity objectives have been achieved in the design and delivery of the curriculum.
6. Responsibilities:

The Governors are responsible for establishing and approving a Race Equality Policy and for monitoring its implementation.

The Vice-Chancellor is responsible for promoting the principles behind the race equality policy both inside and outside of the institution and for ensuring that managers fulfil their role in delivering the Race Equality Policy and that procedures are followed.

Managers/Heads of Departments are responsible for putting the policy into practice and for ensuring that their staff operate within the Race Equality Policy. They are also responsible for ensuring that action is taken against staff or students who discriminate for reasons of race, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origins (or for other factors as outlined in the University's Equal Opportunity Policy).

Teaching staff are responsible for ensuring that the content of their curriculum, teaching methods and materials, classroom values and assessments promote equality of opportunity and good race relations. Teaching staff should also refer to the University's policy on Equal Opportunity for Students, which should be read in conjunction with this policy.

All employees are responsible for promoting race equality and good race relations, and for not discriminating against anyone on the basis of race, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origin. This will involve dealing with racist incidents and being able to recognise and tackle racial bias and for taking up training and learning opportunities. Employees should also refer to the University's policy on Equal Opportunity.

Students are expected to ensure that their behaviour promotes positive relationships between people of difference racial groups and that they follow the University's Race Equality and Equal Opportunity policies. Students should also refer to the University's policy on Equal Opportunity for students.

Contractors and service providers - are responsible for following the race equality (and Equal Opportunity) policies.

7. Breaches of the Policy:

Breach of this policy is considered a serious matter, and if proved, disciplinary action may be taken against those responsible. In addition to penalties imposed by the University, individuals may also be subject to criminal and/or civil proceedings.

Employment breaches

If an employee considers that s/he has not been treated fairly in accordance with this policy, s/he should consult initially with their link HR Manager for their School/Directorate. They may then decide to take forward a complaint under the Grievance Procedure, or, if appropriate, under the Harassment Procedure.

An annual report of complaints received will be presented to the Board.
Applicants to courses
If an applicant to a course or programme considers that s/he has not been treated in accordance with the policy, s/he should make a formal complaint to the Academic Registrar specifying the part of the policy that has not been applied.

Students
Any student who considers that he or she has not been treated in accordance with this policy may use the Students Complaints Procedure.

An annual report of complaints received from applicants and students will be presented to the Academic Board.

8. Specific Duties:
The University also has due regard for the need to meet its specific duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

a) Planning and developing policy. The HR Director, the Deputy HR Director and the Director of Academic and Student Affairs will ensure that race equality issues are considered when planning and developing other policies.

b) Monitoring
i) Monitoring of employees
The Directorate of Human Resources will monitor the following aspects of employment practice on the basis of ethnic origin, as far as possible on a disaggregated basis by School and Directorate. Where systems do not currently permit analysis, every effort will be made to put a system for monitoring in place.

- Selection and training of the members of recruitment panels
- Applications, shortlisted applicants, appointments
- Staffing, by grade, length of service and part-time/full-time/fixed term contract status
- Take-up of training and development opportunities
- Internal promotions/progressions
- Disciplinary and capability cases
- Dismissals and redundancies
- Early retirement

(The standard CRE ethnic categories will be used for this monitoring activity.)

ii) Monitoring of Students:
The Directorate of Academic and Student Affairs will monitor by racial group:

- the admission and progress and achievement of students
- transfers and drop-out rates
- reported incidents and student complaints relating to racial harassment, racial discrimination or relevant student misconduct
Where possible, this will be done at programme, school and whole University level. Where systems do not currently permit analysis, every effort will be made to put a system for monitoring in place.

c. Assessing, reviewing and reporting.

- The HR Director and the Director of Academic and Student Affairs will use the information gained from the monitoring process to assess the effectiveness of the University's policies in tackling racial discrimination and in promoting race equality and good race relations.
- Monitoring data will be reported annually to the Board of Governors and the Academic Board and will be accompanied by such conclusions and recommendations from the data as are felt to be necessary to further promote the objectives of race equality and equality of employment opportunity. This report will be published on the University intranet (and external website) accompanied by any decisions on it. It will also be made available on demand in various formats.
- The report will be submitted also to the Joint Staff Committee, to the Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Group (or equivalent), to all decision making groups across the University and to the Trade Union representatives.
- The Race Equality Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis as part of the overall review process as outlined above.

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