

Writtle COLLEGE

Disability Equality Scheme

If you require the document in an **alternative format** please contact:

Student Support

student.support@writtle.ac.uk

01245 424200

Learning Support Co-ordinator
Writtle College
Chelmsford
CMI 3RR
☐01245 424200

Policy Statement on Equal Opportunities

Writtle College is committed to the principle of equal opportunities both as an employer and as a provider of educational services. In this the College will approach constructively its statutory duties as set out in the Equal Pay Act 1970 (as amended); Equal Pay (Amendment) Regulations 1983, Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and 1986, Race Relations Act 1976, as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and 2005, Employment Rights Act 1996, Human Rights Act 2000, Special Education Needs and Disability Act 2001, Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 and any other relevant legislation and its responsibilities as a good employer and provider of Further and Higher Education.

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Executive Summary

The Disability Equality Scheme and its associated Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan (DESA) outline the College's approach to implementing and monitoring our responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005.

The DESA will be the main mechanism used by the College to monitor its effectiveness in widening accessibility by reporting progress against the plan to the Diversity and Equality Group, formerly the Equal Opportunities Steering Group, of the College.

The DESA comprises a group of activities divided across seven themes:

- 1 Planning for Success
- 2 Embedding Accessibility
- 3 Building and Physical Access
- 4 Learning and Teaching Environment
- 5 Recruitment, Retention and Promotion
- 6 Communication
- 7 Engaging with the Community

The Dis-Tribute project, a College led project within the HE sector, has enabled the College to deliver a number of outcomes that have supported the College to initiate its response to the diversity and equality issues facing the College.

Representatives from the disabled community have been part of the College's development process through the phases of the EASIER , Dis-Tribute and DESA development.

The College defines accessibility to cover the social and environmental issues that need to be addressed within the DESA rather than simply the physical response to the Act.

The plan will be monitored by the Diversity and Equality Group chaired by the Assistant Principal.

The scheme will be reviewed and updated in December 2009.

Introduction

1. The overarching goal of Writtle is to create a learning environment rather than a teaching culture. It is essential that the College builds on the strengths of its practitioner and vocational programmes and in this regard the College curriculum must be accessible to all who seek to benefit from the experience. This engagement needs to reflect the legislative framework of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA, 2001), subsequent Disability Discrimination Act (DDA, 2005) and the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 in a holistic manner.
2. As Chairman of the Equal Opportunities Steering Group it is possible to state clearly that the leadership and commitment of senior staff within the College has already been made by the College.
3. The Disability and Equality Scheme sets out its programme of work under seven themes and these have been informed by and integrated with the Colleges Strategic Plan and the various related planning documents produced by the College.
4. These themes are:
 - 1 Planning for success
 - 2 Embedding accessibility
 - 3 Buildings and Physical Access
 - 4 Learning and Teaching Environment
 - 5 Recruitment, Retention and Promotion
 - 6 Communication
 - 7 Engaging with the Community
5. The College is committed to the Diversity and Equality Action Plan and this plan will be reviewed by the Diversity and Equality Group with an annual report being published each year and presented to the Academic Board of the College.
6. The College will review the Disability and Equality Scheme and Action plan in 2009.

Dr. Jamie MacAskill
Assistant Principal

Context of Diversity and Equality within Writtle College

1. The College has a proud record of widening participation and equality as seen in the published strategic objectives:
 - a. Strategic Objective 9) Ensuring that policy and processes are in place to widen participation;
 - b. Strategic Objective 10) Ensuring that employment and management practices meet equality requirements and best practice standards.
2. The College was fortunate to be given additional support in this regard through the award of HEFCE funding for two projects the EASIER project and the Dis-Tribute project.
3. The EASIER project was funded over 2001 and completed in 2002. It was established to address improvements in the assessment and accessibility needs of disabled students. It also assisted in the training of assessors and in the provision of specialist software for assisted learning.
4. The Dis-Tribute project was funded over the period 2003 to 2005 and its principal objectives were:
 - a. **Objective 1** Raise awareness of issues relating to students with disabilities across the whole institution ensuring compliance with QAA Codes of Practice, SENDA 2001 and other relevant legislation;
 - b. **Objective 2** Develop a greater sensitivity to disability issues amongst staff and students, engendering confidence in relating to and supporting individuals with a range of disabilities.
5. Therefore the EASIER and Dis-Tribute project successes have assisted the College to address diversity and equality and embed good practice within the College to the benefit of an increasingly diverse student body.
6. In preparing our Disability Equality Scheme Action plan (DESA) the Equal Opportunities Steering Group has drawn to great measure on these project successes. The DESA must address those responsibilities, under the DDA (2005), of a public sector organisation:
 - a. promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
 - b. eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act
 - c. eliminate harassment of disabled people that is related to their disabilities
 - d. promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
 - e. encourage participation by disabled people in public life
 - f. take steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably than others
7. The College has embraced the social model of disability as defined by the Disability Rights Commission:
 - a. 'The poverty, disadvantage and social exclusion experienced by many disabled people is not the inevitable result of their impairments or medical conditions, but rather stems from attitudinal or environmental barriers' (The Duty to Promote Disability Equality: Statutory Code of Practice, England and Wales, Disability Rights Commission 2005, paragraph 1.6.).
8. Through the DESA the College seeks to provide a framework for further improvement and to improve communication and embed equality across the organisation and develop a proactive

approach to issues of accessibility within the curriculum or the policies of the organisation.

9. The College promotes diversity and equality through its motivated workforce and students and over the recent past has established a recognisable and sustainable change within the organisation's approach to policy development, pedagogy and accessibility. The DESA will build on this foundation.

Legislation and Other Obligations

1. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 has been amended by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, in order to meet the general duty to promote disability equality and the College has a specific duty to produce a Disability Equality Scheme.
2. The College adheres to its statutory duties as set out in the Equal Pay Act 1970 (as amended); Equal Pay (Amendment) Regulations 1983, Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and 1986, Race Relations Act 1976, as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, The Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Employment Rights Act 1996, Human Rights Act 2000, Special Education Needs and Disability Act 2001, Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006.
3. The College aims to respond constructively to associated frameworks and best practice advice provided by the Learning and Skills Council and the Higher Education Funding Council for England.
4. Copies of all relevant policies are available to staff on the College intranet and awareness levels of staff are developed through staff induction and development training.
5. A careers and equality guide is attached as Appendix C to provide a guide to resources and websites to help accessibility to diversity and equality information.

Learning Support Unit

1. The Learning Support Unit (LSU) seeks to promote the general well-being of students, parents and staff by providing practical help and guidance and by ensuring they have access to a full range of support services.
2. The objectives of the LSU are:
 1. Identifying, co-ordinating and providing study support for students with learning difficulties such as dyslexia;
 2. Co-ordinating and providing support for students with disabilities;
 3. Providing staff and students with the necessary information and skills to ensure they foster full engagement with the curriculum;
 4. Providing a confidential counselling service;
 5. Giving specific and general advice on financial support schemes ;
 6. Providing a professional careers service;
 7. Contributing to the social inclusion agenda through the provision of specialist courses for 14-16 year olds.
3. As a service led unit the views of clients are very important in tailoring the services offered and the form in which they are offered. To ensure that these services are representative and inform the College's ability to anticipate learner needs the following monitoring activities are undertaken:
 - Questionnaires are sent annually to all students with disabilities asking for feedback and

suggestions for improvements;

- Annual destination surveys provide statistical data on student career prospects;
- Feedback on all sessions provided by the Learning Support Unit is also received from the end of year Student Satisfaction Survey;
- External agencies such as the Special Educational Needs and Psychology Service (SENaPS) carry out annual service reviews based on student feedback; the results of these are made available for scrutiny by the LSU;
- The College Services Consultative Group and the Equal Opportunities Steering Group (EOSG) provide a forum three times per year for the discussion of any matters of concern.

4. Each specific issue identified through the monitoring process is considered by appropriate staff within the LSU team and a summary report with suggested action is sent to EOSG for implementation and review. Examples are:

- An individual's accessibility needs not always well communicated between staff in different departments;
- The need for quiet study areas;
- Lack of specialist knowledge about disabilities of some staff;
- The need for improved physical access to some buildings, especially for automatic doors;
- The need for a group or club for students with disabilities;
- Alternative social activities not provided by the SU, eg music and arts;
- Longer library loan periods for students with learning difficulties;
- Students often not aware of the range of services on offer;
- The need for a drop-in centre to help with coursework;
- A student buddy system to provide informal help and support;
- Help and support with forms, computer software etc.

5. Appendix B shows comparative statistics for disabled students at Writtle College

College Policy and Practice

1. The College has approved a suite of policies under the heading "Equal employment and educational opportunities policy" and states:
2. Writtle College is committed to the principle of equal opportunities both as an employer and as a provider of educational services. In this the College will approach constructively its statutory duties as set out in the Equal Pay Act 1970 (as amended); Equal Pay (Amendment) Regulations 1983, Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and 1986, Race Relations Act 1976, as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and 2005, Employment Rights Act 1996, Human Rights Act 2000, Special Education Needs and Disability Act 2001, Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 and any other relevant legislation and its responsibilities as a good employer and provider of Further and Higher Education.
3. Within this Policy the responsibility for equal opportunities across the College is vested with the Assistant Principal and the senior management team of the College who are responsible for the implementation of the policy within their operational areas.
4. The Governing Body, Principal, College Executive, Senior and Line Management, together with the recognised College Trades Unions collectively aim to ensure that all employees are recruited, selected, trained and promoted solely on the basis of ability and the requirements of the job and that no job applicant or existing employee is disadvantaged or unfairly discriminated against on grounds of race, colour of skin, ethnic or national origin, socio-economic background, political affiliation or religious belief, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, age, trade union activity, or disability.

5. The Governing Body, the Academic Board and the College Executive aim to ensure that places on courses at the College are available to all who satisfy the stated entry requirements. In the case of those persons without the conventional entry qualifications, attempts will be made to identify the study potential of such persons using the perceived ability to complete the course as the key criterion on which admission is based. The principle of equal opportunities shall apply to the recruitment and to all aspects of the treatment by the College of its students
6. The College is committed where possible to setting up systems to break down any barriers which might prevent a disabled person from actively participating in the life of the College.
7. Any complaints of discrimination which cannot be resolved informally with the appropriate Line Manger (staff) or Course Manager (Students) can be raised through the approved grievance procedure in the case of staff, and the complaints procedure for students.

Progress on Disability and Equality

1. The Dis-Tribute Project has enabled the College to address many of the issues to be considered within the DESA and has provided strong foundation on which to build the Disability Equality Scheme.
2. The National Disability Team was part of the advisory group for this project and carried out an end of year assessment of the project.
3. The Dis-Tribute team comprised representatives able to bring forward contributions from the main constituencies of the College including student and disabled students views.
4. The main objectives of the Project were to:
 1. Raise awareness of issues relating to students with disabilities across the whole institution ensuring compliance with QAA Codes of Practice, SENDA 2001 and other relevant legislation.
 2. Develop greater sensitivity to disability issues amongst staff and students, engendering confidence in relating to and supporting individuals with a range of disabilities.
 3. Develop a comprehensive set of institutional policies relating to students with disabilities which are co-ordinated with institutional strategies for widening participation, learning and teaching and equal opportunities, and which are particularly appropriate to land-based education.
 4. Deliver a programme of staff development designed to embed the policies across the whole institution.
 5. Integrate issues relating to disability firmly into the strategic planning process.
5. From its inception the Project had **senior management support** through the College Principal and through the Assistant Principal (Business) who steered the Project and continues to manage this aspect of the College's work.
6. The Project took a **life-cycle approach to the student experience**, taking in all contact that students and potential students had with the College from initial enquiry to final destination. A network of Disability Champions was established representing all departments of the College spreading the responsibility for supporting disabled people out to all staff. A group of these Champions continues to advise the Equal Opportunities Steering Group on disability matters.
7. This was underpinned by a **comprehensive programme of disability awareness staff development** and has been continued so that all new staff are appropriately trained and existing staff are kept up to date.

8. The Project also included **student representation** throughout its three years. This is something which needs to be addressed so that it continues to be a feature of the Disability Equality Duty.
9. The Project looked at all College Boards and Committees, including the Board of Governors, to ensure that their work included consideration of the needs of disabled people. Following from this all policies and procedures were impact assessed to ensure that disabled students would not be disadvantaged. For example, the interview process, enrolment and assessment procedures all take the needs of disabled people into consideration and their needs are specifically noted in all new course validations.
10. The Project included representative statistics of disabled students on Writtle courses, in comparison with other providers in the sector.
11. The external evaluator of the Project, Dr. Caroline Davies, concluded that the Project had exceeded its remit in several areas. In particular cultural change across the College was well under way and academic engagement was also progressing well. This is being progressed by the Learning and Teaching Group.
12. The Dis-Tribute Project laid the foundations for excellent provision for disabled students at Writtle. It is essential that these are built upon in the Equality Duty 2006 and continuing into the future. The testimony of staff and students in the case studies included in the report supports this conclusion.
13. The report from this project was printed and circulated nationally within the HE sector.

Current provision (where we are now)

1. The Equal Opportunities Steering Group (EOSG) has undertaken the development of the Disability and Equality Scheme (DES) under the Chairmanship of the College's Assistant Principal. The EOSG comprises representatives from the student and staff communities together with an external representative from the University of Essex. This committee will be renamed the Diversity and Equality Group.
2. This group defined a Terms of Reference for the development of the DES but agreed that the EOSG as a whole should undertake its development.
3. This group has received specific training related to the development of the DES and the Disability and Equality Action Plan (DESA). This training has informed the group's approach to the development of the DES and DESA.
4. The group considered that the work of the Dis-Tribute project had embedded the annual review of policies in relation to the principles of DES and that the Equality Impact Assessment had already been undertaken as part of the Dis-Tribute project review of Policies and Procedures.
5. Data collection and analysis lies at the heart of monitoring the College's success in implementing the DESA and the current data received by the EOSG will be reviewed and assessed within the needs of the DESA.
6. As part of the sharing of best practice between the LSC and further education providers the College now collects Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment data. This data is already available to the EOSG and the group will now review regularly data relating to:

Staff recruitment and selection

Student admissions
Staff promotion and career progression
Student retention, progression and success.

7. The Diversity and Equality Group will consider as part of the DESA improvements in the methods used to gather data and in its presentation and accessibility. Data currently reviewed is attached as Appendix B.

Aims and Objectives of the Scheme

1. The aims of the College's Disability Equality Scheme (DES) are:
 - 1 To ensure that the learning experience offered by the College can be experienced by all those capable to do so and who wish to participate in learning ;
 - 2 To promote equality of opportunity ;
 - 3 To put in place effective processes and systems for review and monitoring of policy and practice to ensure the elimination of residual discrimination from the organisation.

The scheme aims to promote equality of opportunity between disabled and non-disabled students and staff. However, the College is aware that elements of positive choice initiatives may well be required to ensure the outcomes of the DES.

The Action Plan, Reporting Progress and Updating the Plan

The Action plan will be published in December 2006 via the College internet.

A senior manager will chair the Equality and Diversity Group (formerly the Equal Opportunities Steering Group) which will oversee the scheme and its action plan.

This group already contains representation on behalf of disabled students and staff.

Progress of the Diversity and Equality Action plan (DESA) will be monitored by the Diversity and Equality Group.

A review and update of the Scheme will be published in December 2009.

APPENDIX A

Writtle Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan (DESA) 2006 – 2009

The College Disability Equality Scheme is based on 7 key themes

1. Planning for success
2. Embedding accessibility
3. Buildings and Physical Access
4. Learning and Teaching Environment
5. Recruitment, Retention and Promotion
6. Communication
7. Engaging with the Community

Section I Planning for success

Action Point	Strategic Function and Policy impact	Output	Outcome	Process	Input	Responsibility & Date	Performance Indicator
1.1	SO 10: Ensuring that employment and management practices meet equality requirements and best practice standards	List of staff within departments with time and motivation to advise on DES	Earlier awareness of issues from departmental and scheme reviews to ensure equality and accessibility issues highlighted	Provide named staff with time to be trained, promote and advise curriculum and service teams	Inclusion in job role with associated resources, responsibility and reporting requirements	Heads of Function Year 1	Annual production of list and indication of activity
1.2	SO 10: Ensuring that employment and management practices meet equality requirements and	Case studies relating to best practice within functional areas in addressing DES	Awareness of DES within functional areas and indication of staff being proactive in embedding DES	DES Departmental staff to engage in such activities to provide content for annual report and case study	Monitor as part of Role review and performance management procedures	Heads of function Year 1	Section in annual report from each designated individual and one case study

Action Point	Strategic Function and Policy impact	Output	Outcome	Process	Input	Responsibility & Date	Performance Indicator
	best practice standards			information			
1.3	SO10: Ensuring that employment and management practices meet equality requirements and best practice standards	Review and update Dis-Tribute document	Monitoring level of awareness of the Distribute project outcomes across staff	Survey of staff for views and awareness	Establish correct team for analysis	Chair of Diversity and Equality Group Year 1	Review published and disseminated
1.4	LSU 1& 2 Identifying, co-ordinating and providing study support for students with disabilities and learning difficulties such as dyslexia	Review the procedures for identifying learners with disabilities	All learners declaring disabilities followed-up	Annual review of documentation and procedures	Coherence of application and enrolment forms checked and assured	Learner Support Focus Group Annually	Statistical monitoring of disabilities and response timing.
1.5	SO10: Ensuring that employment and management practices meet equality requirements and best practice standards	Revised DES	Make Diversity and Equality an implicit process	Undertake annual review and update of DES	Diversity and Equality Group to undertake review	Chair of Diversity and Equality Group Annually	Revised and updated DES

Section 2 Embedding accessibility

Action Point	Strategic Function and Policy impact	Output	Outcome	Process	Input	Responsibility & Date	Performance Indicator
2.1	T&L 3: Develop in students a capacity for independent learning	A review of Dis-Tribute case studies in terms of corporate learning and re-occurrence of issues	Demonstration that the College is a learning organisation and embeds policy and processes correctly	Follow up with authors of case studies and identification of any lingering issues to be addressed or not completed	Identification of appropriate individuals in the absence of the Dis-Tribute project team leadership	EOSG Year 1	Post project closure report analysis of Dis-Tribute project
2.2	SO 8 Embedding a comprehensive communications and IT strategy	Set of data tables that provide appropriate measures for diversity and equality	Improved understanding of trends and associated ability to anticipate issues	Diversity and Equality group to systematically review data sources and their use	Data flow and handling review	Head of Planning Year 2	Report on use of data and suggested improvements
2.3	SO 9 Ensuring that policy and processes are in place to widen participation	Revised guide published to staff and students understand better the admission cycle	Promote equality of opportunity through clearer publications and promotional material	A marketing and admissions group to review documentation	Review and amend current suite of publications and address any gaps in promoting diversity and equality	Head of Marketing Year 1 -2	A systematic review of promotional collateral
2.4	T&L 4 Offer participation opportunities to students from a wide range of social and educational backgrounds	Enrolment process supportive of early disclosure of disability	Supports the proactive development of resources to reduce barriers to participation	Improved awareness of all staff in promoting disclosure	Staff training in promoting disclosure	Head of Learning Support Head of Registry Year 1	A reduction in late disclosures requiring last minute attention
2.5	SO 10 Ensuring that employment and management	Front-line staff receive enhanced training programme	Staff trained to NCEF level 2 Certificate in Equality and	Staff development and appraisal processes to identify those	Staff development programme	Head of HR Head of Registry Year 2	List of staff with enhanced Diversity and Equality

Action Point	Strategic Function and Policy impact	Output	Outcome	Process	Input	Responsibility & Date	Performance Indicator
	practices meet equality requirements and best practice standards		Diversity	staff requiring enhanced training			qualifications
2.6	LSU 3 Providing staff and students with the necessary information and skills to ensure they foster full engagement with the curriculum	Review the existing knowledge of disabilities with which staff need to engage at start of each academic year	Improved staff knowledge of specific learning difficulties and disabilities for students on their courses	Targeted staff development by LSU staff	Extend the 'Deaf Awareness' type of SD to other forms of disability.	LSU Year 2	Increased attendance at designated SD events
2.7	LSU 2 Co-ordinating and providing support for students with disabilities	Review the number of courses receiving information about Learning Support	Increased student awareness of the LSU services on offer	LSU to visit all courses at induction	Standard delivery information package with options for follow-up.	LSU Annually at induction	Number of courses receiving information at induction
2.8	SO 9 Ensuring that policy and processes are in place to widen participation	Assist SU in setting up 'Accessibility Club'	Self sustaining accessibility forum	LSU to broker setting up and maintaining facilities for meeting opportunities	Provision of physical resources, communication channels and guidance.	LSU Year 2	Number of meetings and attendance

Section 3 Buildings and Physical Access

Action Point	Strategic Function and Policy impact	Output	Outcome	Process	Input	Responsibility & Date	Performance Indicator
3.1	SO 10	Access Audit	Improved	Carryout	Carry out regular	Estates and	Access Audit

Action Point	Strategic Function and Policy impact	Output	Outcome	Process	Input	Responsibility & Date	Performance Indicator
	Ensuring that employment and management practices meet equality requirements and best practice standards		planning tools to anticipate accessibility needs	improvements to teaching and residential areas to enhance learning experience	updates of access audits and enter results into property request tracker	Property Annually	updates published
3.2	SO 10 Ensuring that employment and management practices meet equality requirements and best practice standards	Supply tactile, visual signage, ramps and other equipment to help the less-abled throughout the Estate	Improved accessibility to students, staff and visitors	Prioritise work from Access Audits in the planned maintenance schedule	All works are entered onto the Property Request Tracker, which is regularly updated and reviewed.	Estates and Property Year 2	Included on the Property Request Tracker
3.3	SO 6 Enhancing and developing teaching and learning	Fire awareness, Health & Safety recommendations set to minimise risks associated with diversity and equality.	Safer environment for staff, students and visitors	H&S officer and Maintenance Manager will highlight any areas that may have increased risk	Maintenance Manager will organise works to minimise risk	Estates and Property Year 1	Included in H&S risk reduction plan
3.4	LSU2 Co-ordinating and providing support for students with disabilities	Review the physical access to buildings	Increased accessibility to buildings eg automatic doors	Forward planning of facilities as part of the Estate Master planning exercise through to 2021	Costing model for grants/capital works budget allocation	Property Services Year 3	Number of accessible buildings

Section 4 Learning and Teaching Environment

Action Point	Strategic Function and Policy impact	Output	Outcome	Process	Input	Responsibility & Date	Performance Indicator
4.1	T&L 2: Make positive and significant contributions to the development of equal opportunity in the Eastern region	Curriculum development to maximise accessibility	Embedded disability awareness culture within curriculum development	Include specific questions in process relating to explaining anticipatory actions taken	Allow flexibility in procedures for this process to occur	Academic Services/ embedded into QA manual and departmental actions	Revised procedures relating to curriculum development and review
4.2	T&L 3: Facilitate a capacity for independent student learning	Publication of plan to have 50% of learning support materials included in VLE by Year 3 of DESA	Improved accessibility and presentation of learning materials	Departments to be set annual targets for development and publishing of materials	Inclusion of targets in annual monitoring reviews of academic areas	Heads of academic units Years 1-3	Targets set and in annual monitoring plan
4.3	SO 8: Embedding a comprehensive communications and IT strategy	Review of assistive technologies including VLE	Recommendations for physical and curriculum materials development	Development of new Teaching and Learning strategies to include anticipatory adjustments	Development of Teaching and Learning strategies to provide review context	Educational Development Year2	DES dimension included in T&L strategies and action plans Year 1 and review published in year 2
4.4	LSUI Identifying, co-ordinating and providing study support for students with	Review the need for quiet study areas	Sufficient discrete areas available for study	Designation of rooms for private study consistent with room utilisation	Carry out/refer to earlier room utilisation survey	Property services	Number of rooms designated for private study use

Action Point	Strategic Function and Policy impact	Output	Outcome	Process	Input	Responsibility & Date	Performance Indicator
	learning difficulties such as dyslexia						
4.5	LSU1 Identifying, co-ordinating and providing study support for students with learning difficulties such as dyslexia	Policy on library loan period to be reviewed and flexed on the basis of justifiable need	Extended library loans available to designated learners	LSU to notify library of individual need. Library to manually override loan period.	Staff resources	LSU/library Sep 06	Number of students utilising longer library loan periods
4.6	LSU3 Providing staff and students with the necessary information and skills to ensure they foster full engagement with the curriculum	Provide facilities for supplementary learning	Drop-in sessions at specified times for learners to access study support	Foster arrangements for casual support sessions on an as required basis	Staffing by generalist/specialist staff on rotational basis to published timetable	LSO/Course teams	Take-up of support sessions

Section 5 Recruitment, Retention and Promotion

Action Point	Strategic Function and Policy impact	Output	Outcome	Process	Input	Responsibility & Date	Performance Indicator
5.1	HRS 1: Recruitment and Retention	Review the number of disabled people applying for and being short-listed for vacant posts, and appointed.	Increased number of disabled people applying for and being short-listed for vacant posts.	Targets to be set in line with local area statistics; material available in other mediums e.g. large print if requested	Ensure disability 'two ticks' symbol on recruitment advertising; EO information in recruitment pack	Human Resources Manager / Recruitment and Staff Development Manager Year 1	Annual statistical monitoring, reported to and monitored by the EOSG
5.2	HRS 2: Staff Development	Expansion of existing disability staff development sessions and events to expand the range disabilities covered. Good general understanding of disability by all staff.	Increased staff awareness to cover a wider range of disabilities. Equality and Diversity (E&D) certificate undertaken by all new staff and introduced for all existing staff.	Review current disability subjects covered in the annual Staff development programme; include others as necessary. Revise staff induction to include E&D qualification as a standard part of the process. Identify existing staff within the institution to undertake the E&D qualification, commencing with the DDR's.	Line manager involvement to encourage and support staff development activities in relation to the E&D; Provide training to line managers as necessary.	Human Resources Manager / Recruitment and Staff Development Manager Year 1	Increased number of staff with E&D qualification; increased attendance at staff development sessions; greater understanding across the College in a variety of disability issues. Monitored through attendance figures for SD annual report.

Action Point	Strategic Function and Policy impact	Output	Outcome	Process	Input	Responsibility & Date	Performance Indicator
5.3	HRS 3: Equal Opportunities	Review of staff and student break down to ensure a balanced ratio (staff:student) profile; review of general statistical information on recruitment and staff development activities.	Balanced profile of staff reflected in the student numbers; good recruitment and staff development attendance indicating a balanced recruitment and selection process.	Review of statistical information available from recruitment EO monitoring form; SD activities; and annual Staff HESA information	HR Officer – Recruitment & SD to keep records on an on-going basis throughout the year. Set targets for subsequent years.	Human Resources Manager / Recruitment and Staff Development Manager Year 1	Annual statistical monitoring, reported to and monitored by the EOSG
5.4	HRS 4: Staffing Needs / Performance Management	Review of staff involvement and understanding of disability and other E&D issues.	Staff are able to handle any situation in an informed and professional manner.	Line managers to ensure staff attend SD sessions and encourage continued learning in related areas. Support staff undertaking and completing the E&D qualification.	Publication of the annual SD Schedule enabling line managers to know when to encourage their staff to attend appropriate SD sessions.	Human Resources Manager / Recruitment and Staff Development Manager Year 1 – SD publication Year 2 – analysis and monitoring against set targets.	Annual statistical monitoring, reported to and monitored by the EOSG
5.5	LSU1&2 Identifying, co-ordinating and providing study support for students with disabilities and learning	Provide personal support for clients requiring help with forms, advice and guidance etc at recruitment events	Enhancement of support given to minimise barriers to participation in learning	Improved co-ordination of staffing resource required for external events such as open days/evenings, induction,	Staff workload allocations adjusted to reflect diversity and equality needs	LSU As required	Number of events covered

Action Point	Strategic Function and Policy impact	Output	Outcome	Process	Input	Responsibility & Date	Performance Indicator
	difficulties such as dyslexia			enrolment and registration events			
5.6	LSU 6: Providing a professional careers service LSU4: Providing a confidential counselling service	An extended student support service	Introduction of a student peer mentoring scheme	Introduction of a nucleus for a wider broad-based approach to support issues capitalising on in-house professionals	Staff/student time designated to scheme; AimHigher funded project	AimHigher project manager, LSU staff/SU Pilot scheme yr 1 -2	Production of report reviewing Pilot scheme

Section 6 Communication

Action Point	Strategic Function and Policy impact	Output	Outcome	Process	Input	Responsibility & Date	Performance Indicator
6.1	SO 9): Ensuring that policy and processes are in place to widen participation	Inclusion of Dis-Tribute project publication and Guide for disabled students in application information	Encouragement in applications for both staff and student to disclose disabilities earlier in process	Appropriate discussions about point of inclusion of material or integration of information in main publications	Analysis of enquiry process and admissions processes to highlight, improve percentage of applications from students with a disability	Marketing By Year 1 and reviewed annually through Year 3	Increased number of applications from target audience

Action Point	Strategic Function and Policy impact	Output	Outcome	Process	Input	Responsibility & Date	Performance Indicator
6.2	T&L 4 Offer participation opportunities to students from a wide range of social and educational backgrounds	A revised media plan for student recruitment related activities to include impact of diversity and equality dimension and positive choice	Improved awareness of College's facilities and capabilities across a broader recruitment base	Press and Publicity Officer to consult with relevant individuals to ensure plan targets relevant sectors of press and community	Focus groups and analysis of media effectiveness within target groups	Marketing By Year 1 and reviewed and updated annually through Year 3	Statistics on effectiveness of media plan within targeted sectors of community
6.3	T&L 7 Provide a supportive well resourced learning environment which meets academic and social needs	Publish activities relating to progression and accessibility	Improved professional tools for careers and guidance officers	Centre for Educational Development to develop a programme for staff to gather evidence and materials	Stimulate interest of staff in related curriculum development initiatives	Head of Educational Development Year 2	A set of on-line and printed materials
6.4	SO 6) Enhancing and developing teaching and learning. Co-ordinating and providing support for students with disabilities	Revised process for alerting/notifying staff of individual student needs	Improved communication of individual needs to staff tutoring students with disabilities	Revise procedures for distributing student needs forms (SNFs)	Interested parties to meet and review current procedure and to look into feasibility of electronic distribution	LSU/IS/Academic Services/Registry Year 1	Improved accuracy and timeliness of information

Section 7 Engaging with the Community

Action Point	Strategic Function and Policy impact	Output	Outcome	Process	Input	Responsibility & Date	Performance Indicator
7.1	T&L 4 Offer participation opportunities to students from a wide range of social and educational backgrounds	Groundbreakers programme linking schools and feeder colleges events	Improved awareness of equality of opportunity in potential students	Invitations to schools to visit the College or for tutors to visit their organisations	Schools liaison Officer and Widening Participation Officer to review events listings and mail shots	Schools Liaison and Widening participation officers Year 1	Annual improvement in diversity of engagement with school Satisfaction survey analysis
7.2	T&L 7 Provide a supportive well resourced learning environment which meets academic and social needs	Visit schedule of organisations dealing with learning difficulties to spend day on campus	Opportunity to utilise campus resources for the improvement of quality of life or aspiration	Prepare visit schedule and staffing resource needs	Learning Support Officer as liaison and day coordinator point	Head of Learning Support Year 2	Visit schedule approved and resourced and satisfaction survey analysis
7.3	SO 9) Ensuring that policy and processes are in place to widen participation	Public relations day for village and Borough	An annual event	Link with Groundbreakers programme	Staff resource	Head of Marketing Year 2	Satisfaction and awareness survey analysis
7.4	LSU1&2 Identifying, co-ordinating and providing study support for students with	Review the provision of social activities provided for staff and students with disabilities and/or	Enhanced range of activities available which appeal to a wider range of clients utilising the	Specify a checking procedure which addresses accessibility issues at the point of devising extra-	Liaison between event management personnel	SU HR Marketing Year 2	Take-up of activities by greater diversity of client groups

Action Point	Strategic Function and Policy impact	Output	Outcome	Process	Input	Responsibility & Date	Performance Indicator
	disabilities and learning difficulties such as dyslexia	other requirements	external services from the community	mural activities			
7.5	T&L 2 Make positive and significant contributions to the economic. Social and cultural development of the Eastern region	Reports or publications to permit the Student Union and the Raise and Give community to monitor effectiveness of disability activities	Creating a positive attitude towards disability within College and wider Community	Identification of a range of strategic partners within voluntary sector to support and encourage SU activities	Liaison between SU and College about staffing resources required for plan to develop	Student Union and Raise and Give Charity.	Publish annual report of charity based events and their contribution to the wider community that also recognises strategic partners

ABBREVIATIONS:

- DES Disability Equality Scheme
- DESA Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan
- HR Human Resources Objective
- HRS Human Resource Strategy Objective
- LSU Learning Support Unit Objective
- SENaPS Special Educational Needs and Psychology Service
- SO Strategic Plan Objective
- SU Student Union
- T&L Teaching and Learning strategy Objective

GLOSSARY:

- VLE Virtual Learning Environment

APPENDIX B

Learning Support Unit – Disability Equality Scheme Statistics

Writtle has extensive and increasing experience in providing courses that include students with disabilities. The rising proportion of students declaring disabilities (Table 1) is in part due to improved diagnostic techniques, an increasing level of staff training and awareness and, especially in the case of hearing impaired, building a reputation locally within the disabled community.

Table 1: Percentage of students declaring a disability

	2001-02		2002-03		2003-04		2004-05	
	Writtle	all HEIs	Writtle	all HEIs	Writtle	all HEIs	Writtle	all HEIs
Percentage of students declaring disability	16%	5%	18%	5%	16%	5%	14%	6%

In the agriculturally related subject areas at all levels: national, land-based and at the college level, there is a higher than average number of students with disabilities and, in particular, of students who have difficulties of a dyslexic nature. The more creative or skills based courses appear to attract a higher number of dyslexic students and this proportion is reflected in the Writtle population (Table 2).

Table 2: Percentage of students in each category of those declaring a disability

	2001-02		2002-03		2003-04		2004-05	
	Writtle	all HEIs	Writtle	all HEIs	Writtle	all HEIs	Writtle	all HEIs
Dyslexia	48%	36%	50%	40%	55%	41%	60%	43%
Blind/partially sighted	1%	3%	2%	3%	0%	3%	0%	3%
Deaf/Hearing impairment	6%	6%	4%	6%	5%	6%	4%	6%
Wheelchair/User mobility problem	2%	5%	2%	5%	1%	5%	2%	4%
Personal care support needed	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Mental health difficulties	2%	4%	3%	5%	3%	5%	5%	5%
Autistic spectrum disorder or Asperger	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Unseen disability e.g. asthma,epilepsy	30%	25%	29%	21%	26%	20%	21%	19%
Multiple disabilities	3%	7%	2%	7%	2%	8%	1%	8%
Disability not listed	8%	12%	7%	13%	8%	12%	7%	12%

These statistics do, of course, need to be considered carefully especially as they represent *known* disabilities as not all disable people identify themselves as having a disability or learning difficulty. Writtle also has a significant population of Further Education students and comparison with HESA data requires careful interpretation.

Signposting guide: equal opportunity career issues

Writtle College Careers Centre

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Titles available on the intranet and to take away in Maddison MB10
<u>Job-hunting in agriculture</u>
<u>Job-hunting in agricultural engineering</u>
<u>Job-hunting in the animal-related sectors</u>
<u>Job-hunting in business and general sectors</u>
<u>Job-hunting in design</u>
<u>Job-hunting in the equine-related sectors</u>
<u>Job-hunting in horticulture, landscape & floristry</u>
<u>Job-hunting in leisure and sports</u>
<u>Job-hunting in rural management and the environment</u>
<u>CV writing: playing the game to win</u>
<u>Equal opportunities</u>
<u>Further study, financing a course and self employment</u>
<u>How to succeed at interviews: playing the game to win</u>
<u>Obtaining work experience placements overseas</u>
<u>Part-time and summer work</u>
<u>Writing jobsearch letters: playing the game to win</u>

Introduction

All students are encouraged to contact the Careers Centre for initial help with equal opportunity matters. It is important that you let us know if an employer is possibly treating you unfairly. We can then sometimes help with advocacy or employer liaison. We also need to know if you think our services can be improved in any way. We can also help you deal with employers' selection methods, and discuss strategy over disclosure issues. We can help you obtain specialist help from other sources, such as Jenny Gowing (Disabilities Coordinator).

Gender, race and other issues

The following guides are available in the Careers Centre, Maddison Building.

Hobsons Guide for Career Women

Hobsons Guide for Ethnic Minorities

Opportunity Careers Magazine for Black and Asian Students

Ethnic Britain: a Directory of Opportunity

<http://www.eoc.org.uk/> - this site provides advice about gender, race and disability issues from the Equal Opportunities Commission.

<http://www.equalitydirect.org.uk/> - this site provides help and advice for employers about equal opportunities issues.

<http://www.cre.gov.uk> - the website of the Commission for Racial Equality.

Disability

The following guides and sources of information are available in the Careers Centre, Maddison Building.

Disabled Students Guide to University

Diversity Handbook

Hobsons Guide for Students with Disabilities

Directory of External Agencies Providing Advice and Guidance for Students and Graduates with Disabilities

<http://www.drc-gb.org> - Disability Rights Commission.

<http://www.disabilitytoolkits.ac.uk> - covers work experience, disability-friendly employers, disability disclosure, sources of funding and legal matters.

<http://www.greatjobs.org.uk/> - Graduate Recruitment Employment and Training, this programme is backed by the Papworth Trust, and supports disabled graduates into employment.

<http://www.disabilitynow.org.uk> - leading newspaper for people with disabilities in UK.

<http://www.readywillingable.net> - on-line recruitment bulletin for disabled people.

<http://www.youreable.com> - worldwide disability information centre. Some vacancies are advertised.

<http://www.skill.org.uk/> - Skill assists disabled students in higher education.

<http://www.opportunities.org.uk/> - employment advice web site for people with disabilities and employers.

General employment issues

The following guides are available in the Careers Centre.

The Welfare to Work Handbook

TUC Guide to Your Rights at Work

<http://www.nacab.org.uk> – the Citizens Advice Bureaux provide information about rights at work, and links to the remaining Low Pay Units.

Adults (aged 20 and over) can use <http://www.myiag.co.uk/> (nationwide) and/or

www.essexwaytogo.com (Essex) to obtain information and advice.

<http://www.tuc.org.uk/> - detailed information about your rights at work, and work-based equal opportunities issues.

<http://www.worksmart.org.uk> - TUC service providing up to date information and advice about your rights at work.

<http://www.dti.gov.uk/er/nmw/index.htm> - National Minimum Wage information.

<http://www.pcaw.co.uk/> - Public Concern at Work, this charity helps individuals pursue 'whistleblowing' claims against their employer (see Public Interest Disclosure Act, 1999).

<http://www.worktrain.gov.uk/> - provides local childcare information.

Specific sources of help for young people

The following guides are available in the Careers Centre.

Young Person's Handbook: Financial Support and Work-based learning for 16-17 Year Olds

Connexions Information Leaflet

Contact your **Personal Adviser** by either arranging an appointment in the Careers Centre or phoning Chelmsford Connexions Centre on 01245 707806.

Young people (aged 19 and under) can use www.estconnexions.co.uk (Essex) and/or

www.connexions.gov.uk (nationwide) to obtain information and advice.

Help and support for mature jobseekers

The following guide is available in the Careers Centre.

Mature Students - The Way Forward

<http://www.fiftyon.co.uk/> - this site provides an extensive database of jobs, sorted by region, that may be suitable for older workers.

<http://www.maturityworks.co.uk/> - another extensive database of live vacancies suitable for older workers.

<http://www.taen.org.uk/> - the Third Age Employment Network provides advice and information. There is a helpline available for people who would like advice, they also offer assistance to those who feel they may have suffered from unfair age discrimination.

<http://www.efa.org.uk/> - Employers Forum on Age.

<http://www.caade.net/> - Campaign Against Age Discrimination in Employment.

Help for international students

The following guide is available in the careers Centre.

Careers and Further Study for International Students

English classes - available at Writtle via Michelle Lundstram, classes usually take place one day per week in the evening. Email michellelundstram@yahoo.co.uk

Part-time work - see our guide to [Part-time and summer work](#)

<http://www.ukcosa.org.uk/pages/pub.htm> - UKCOSA's guidance notes provide an explanation of full work permits, TWES permits, passport stamps, shortage occupations, and the Highly Skilled Migrant Programme.

<http://www.workingintheuk.gov.uk> - Government source of information regarding working in the UK features new guidance on the Highly Skilled Migrant Programme (including the young person's tariff), and the new Science and Engineering Graduates Scheme.

Please note: the quality of web sites may vary and inclusion in this list does not constitute a recommendation. You are welcome to arrange time with the Careers Adviser in order to obtain further help with websites, and other careers-related matters.