



north west
regional college

Derry/Londonderry • Limavady • Strabane

CULTURAL DIVERSITY
CODE OF PRACTICE
(STAFF & STUDENTS)



Embracing ulture

CONTENTS

| | Page |
|---------------------------|------|
| 1. Introduction | 3 |
| 2. Staff Responsibilities | 4 |
| 3. Students | 6 |
| 4. Monitoring | 6 |



CULTURAL DIVERSITY CODE OF PRACTICE (STAFF & STUDENTS)

1 Introduction

The North West Regional College respects and values all its workforce and students, and believes that the College, and the communities it serves, will benefit from it engaging staff and recruiting students from a variety of racial, ethnic and national backgrounds. The College is committed to meeting the needs of a diverse student population within a multicultural society. The North West Regional College will treat all employees and students with respect and dignity, and seek to provide a positive working and learning environment free from racial discrimination, harassment or victimisation. The College acknowledges that culture is represented in many ways – language, dress, symbols and events. All cultures within the North West Regional College staff and student body will be included whether they are relatively new or traditional.

The North West Regional College seeks to create a working and learning environment based on positive relations between members of different racial groups. To this end the College undertakes to provide training and support for staff and students and to provide diverse images in any material which it produces for learners and staff. The aim is to create a good and harmonious environment where issues of racism, stereotyping and discrimination can be discussed openly with a shared commitment to challenging and preventing racism and respecting diversity and difference and to encourage good relations between people of different groups.

The College will produce this code of practice in alternative formats on request, wherever possible e.g. Braille, Large Print, Computer Disk and Audio Cassette etc.

The College is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and good relations in accordance with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. This code of practice should be interpreted in a manner consistent with the aforementioned legislation.

2 Staff Responsibilities

2.1 The Board of Governors, Senior Management Team and Heads of Departments

The Board of Governors, Senior Management Team and Heads of Departments have particular responsibility for ensuring that Section 75 is implemented. This includes:

- awareness of North West Regional College's statutory duties in relation to the Race Relations Order;
- designing policies that include a commitment to the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations;
- providing all staff with intercultural awareness training and staff development courses;
- providing induction and training in Cultural Diversity issues for all students, reflecting the College's commitment to the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations;
- ensuring that any policies or procedures which are in place in relation to suspension or expulsion do not discriminate unlawfully on racial grounds;
- ensuring that all complaints of racism/sectarianism will be dealt with under the harassment procedure;
- provide where appropriate interpreters for different languages and consider the support needed for those whose first language is not English;
- developing regular and direct consultation with ethnic minority groups to ensure that students' needs are met within the framework of the College;
- develop signage in different languages to promote an inclusive environment.

2.2 Lecturers

Lecturers are responsible for ensuring that:

- they are aware of the College's statutory duties in relation to the Race Relations Order and how that affects their remit;
- schemes of work, lesson content and teaching resources demonstrate sensitivity to issues of cultural diversity;
- the correct pronunciation of ethnic minority students' names is used. Lecturers should NOT attempt to abbreviate or use an anglicised version of a student's name;
- sources and visuals used in teaching materials should be justly representative of cultural and ethnic minorities, in that text and images should be considered from the entire College community and not just the culturally dominant groups;

- when using material or dealing with potentially sensitive issues with regard to Cultural Diversity, they should make students aware that the views expressed in the material are not the views of the (lecturer/College) but also be able to justify the use of that material (i.e. fulfils the aim of lesson/module);
- where possible, they should aim to integrate ethnic minority students with majority students in order to promote mutual respect and understanding between groups. For example when an element/module of a course requires a group project/presentation the lecturers involved should try to group students from diverse cultural backgrounds together so that fears, stereotypes and myths are dispelled by working towards a common aim;
- they have made themselves aware of culturally significant events and holidays which arise for their ethnic minority students and raise them during the academic year so that they are aware of potential issues (e.g. absenteeism) around this time and deal with them with due regard and sensitivity. This can be done by creating minimal disruption to the education process of the students e.g. in the case of religious holidays, provide updates on material covered during absences from class;
- the wearing of culturally or religiously significant clothing by students at the College e.g. turbans, headscarves is respected;
- they must be consistent in the treatment of all students in order to avoid accusations of discrimination.

2.3 Support and Administration Staff

Support and Administration Staff are responsible for ensuring that:

- they are aware of the North West Regional College's statutory requirements in relation to Section 75 and how that affects their remit;
- they demonstrate patience and understanding if a learner's linguistic ability proves a bar to communication and will make every effort to try and assist the student involved;
- they should avoid using colloquial language as this is a barrier to effective communication;
- they should be aware when dealing with immigrants that questions relating to dependants or next of kin may be especially sensitive;
- they are aware that they are often the point of first contact between the student and the College and as such should deal with all students irrespective of their cultural background in a fair and equitable manner;
- they should be consistent in their dealings with all students to avoid accusations of discrimination.

3 Students

Sometimes standing up against racism and discriminatory behaviour can be a difficult process, as often you are isolating yourself against the majority. This can even include your friends and classmates. However, this is an issue that needs to be addressed as everyone deserves to study in an environment free from racism, sectarianism and discriminatory behaviour in order to reach their full potential.

3.1 Student Responsibilities

Below are some responsibilities that students at the North West Regional College have in order to facilitate this healthy learning environment.

- Assist the College in creating and maintaining a learning environment free from racism and sectarianism. Students should behave in a manner that should not be offensive to other students, staff or the general public.
- Adhere to policies which help ensure a learning environment free from racism and sectarianism.
- Challenge racist/sectarian remarks or behaviour among your fellow students.
- Report incidents of racism or sectarianism to your Student Union representative or a member of staff.
- Support fellow students who are being harassed.
- Fully participate in any training/induction programmes that the North West Regional College runs in relation to Cultural Diversity training
- Create forums within the Students' Union where issues can be addressed or resolved in an informal manner.
- Strive to include students of all backgrounds in your day to day social and academic life.
- Where you come across ethnic minority students in the day to day life of the College you should learn the correct pronunciation of the student's name and should NOT shorten, anglicise or give a nickname to that student unless given permission to by that person.
- The Students' Union will play an active role in identifying cultural and minority problems and will work with the College to address.

4 Monitoring

This code of practice will be monitored by the Equality Working Group who will assess effectiveness post implementation by the use of surveys and audits.

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