

**Ruskin Mill Educational Trust
Gender Equality Scheme
2007-2010**

Making Gender Equality Happen!

This Gender Equality Scheme sets out the framework within which Ruskin Mill Educational Trust (otherwise known as the Trust) promotes equality and strives to eliminate all forms of gender discrimination against students, staff, visitors and contractors. In developing the Scheme the Trust is aware that individuals can be included in more than one diversity category and thus face more potential intentional and unintentional discrimination. The Trust recognises that the diversity of our students and staff is one of our greatest strengths.

This Gender Equality Scheme is published on our website at www.ruskin-mill.org.uk

**This document can be made available in large print or in alternative formats that meet individual needs.
Please contact the Department of Human Resources at
Ruskin Mill College 01453 837520.**

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Trust wishes to ensure that it is able to meet both the general and specific duties of the Gender Equality Duty, which comes into force on 6th April 2007.

The Gender Equality Scheme is a way for us to tackle discrimination and harassment based on gender identity in a practical way by ensuring our policies actively promote opportunities and prevents discrimination and harassment from taking place. By taking an organisational wide approach we can achieve tangible outcomes and improvements for people. With personal commitment from the top of our organisation we will seek to make a real, positive change to both employees and service users.

Our organisational vision is to help contribute towards a society where there is:

- An equal distribution of power and influence between women and men;
- Economic equality between women and men, resulting in life-long economic independence;
- An equal distribution of unpaid care and household work;
- An end to violence against women.

Our organisation seeks to promote equality between men and women at work.

The Trust's Council of Management is responsible to the Trustees for ensuring that the Gender Equality Scheme and Gender Equality Action Plan is continuously promoted and comprehensively implemented in all aspects of the Trust's operation.

To this end we undertake to do the following:

- Develop and publish our Gender Equality Scheme by 6th April 2007 and our Gender Equality Action Plan by 30th April 2007;

- Develop an organisational approach, which promotes equality of opportunity between genders;
- Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Equality Act 2006;
- Eliminate harassment based on gender differences;
- Take steps to identify any shortfalls in our policies and practices which may inadvertently lead to gender inequality.

2. INVOLVING PEOPLE

2.1

Our Gender Equality Scheme will adopt a joint approach through actively involving people in its development from the outset.

People will be involved in:

- Designing an employee monitoring process which captures key data enabling the organisation to monitor gender equality;
- Helping set priorities for action plans;
- Assisting with planning activity.

We will involve:

Existing and prospective staff;

Existing and future students;

Sub contracting services;

Relevant funding bodies.

We will use information on good practice from organisations such as the Equal Opportunities Commission and relevant government reports.

2.2.

The method and process of involvement will vary and opinions will be sought as to the most effective means of involvement.

3. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS ON EXISTING POLICIES AND PRACTICE

3.1

We will undertake a comprehensive impact assessment on all of our existing policies and processes which may inadvertently have any gender bias or adverse impact on male/female/transsexual staff and students.

3.2

We will adopt the vision of a fairer society seeking to make sure our policies and practices contribute in some way to:

- An equal distribution of power and influence between women and men;
- Economic equality between women and men, resulting in life-long economic independence;
- An equal distribution of unpaid care and household work;
- An end to violence against women.

3.3

Staff expertise will be developed to carry this through and the findings will be presented to the Council of Management through the Trust Equality and Diversity Working Forum with recommendations for change as appropriate.

4. ARRANGEMENTS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACTION PLAN

4.1

The Trust will meet the general duty placed upon it by the Gender Equality Duty by undertaking to produce a comprehensive action plan drawn up by 30th April 2007 clearly committing the Trust to a time-scale for activities to take place.

The Action Plan will include:

- Clear time-scales for activities;
- The person/persons responsible for the activities;

- Agreed improvement targets;
- A traffic light system for recording progress against actions.

4.2

The Council of Management will be responsible for ensuring the Action Plan is reviewed at regular intervals and amended in light of new activities identified/or activities which need changing as the result of information that has come to light.

5. GATHERING INFORMATION - EMPLOYMENT

5.1

We will use an equal opportunities monitoring form to offer staff the opportunity to declare the following information:

- Gender;
- Gender identity;
- Working patterns;
- Relationship status;
- Caring responsibilities.

5.2

Staff will be involved in designing sensitive and confidential mechanisms for collecting such information.

5.3

The information gathered will contribute to monitoring the following to demonstrate:

- Recruitment is open to all and gender is not used as a selection criteria except where it can be demonstrated as a genuine occupational requirement and an exemption is in place;
- Job types and areas of work closely match or even exceed national norms;

- Annual appraisal information reveals an equal spread between genders with no significant bias;
- Promotion is open to all and all staff have access to suitable promotion opportunities as they arise;
- Access to training/development opportunities will be monitored to ensure there are no barriers evident for staff either through gender difference or caring responsibilities which prevent participation in suitable training opportunities;
- Working hours adjustments are in place to meet caring responsibilities;
- Sexual harassment cases are scrutinised to ensure that steps are taken to provide a safe working environment for all;
- Monitoring of disciplinary actions and dismissals is carried out and consideration is given to establishing that gender identity plays no part in the actions or if it is a contributory factor this is investigated;
- Transsexual staff have the opportunity to record this within the monitoring process and discrimination and harassment due to gender identity will be investigated and acted on;
- All grievances which are raised will record gender identity and consideration is given to establishing whether a gender identity issue might be behind the grievance;
- Staff who are pregnant and those with caring responsibilities will be treated in accordance with the laws which cover their rights to time off etc.;
- Reasons for leaving will be recorded and gender information will be considered annually to check if this plays any part in the reasons for leaving.

5.4

All existing and prospective staff will be given the opportunity annually to state whether they consider the Trust to be an employer, which fosters a gender equality environment.

6. GATHERING INFORMATION - SERVICE USERS

6.1

We will undertake to collect information prior to the point of admission and will monitor the data to establish whether gender precluded the person from being offered a place.

6.2

All learner achievement records will be monitored at frequent intervals to ensure that the gender of the learner is fully taken into account when setting and reviewing achievement targets.

6.3

Regular reviews of the curriculum will be undertaken to ensure that gender equality and a vision of a fair society is actively promoted and positive gender role models are emphasized.

6.4

Review of the curriculum will include ensuring all learning opportunities are open to male/female and transsexual students and that any identified barriers are overcome.

6.5

Extra curricular activities taking place within residential setting will be reviewed to ensure all learners have equal access to leisure time activities and their gender identity does not adversely affect their experiences during their leisure time.

6.6

Active steps will be taken to recruit learners to address the gender imbalance where it is seen to be out of step with national statistics.

6.7

Qualitative measures which will be used to inform improvement activity will include one or more of the following:

- Staff surveys;
- Student surveys;
- Feedback from staff network groups;
- Feedback from Colleges' Equality and Diversity Working Groups;
- Analysis of complaints;
- Research.

7. USE OF INFORMATION GATHERED

7.1

The Trust will analyse any differentials in the areas monitored on gender, investigate the reasons for them; and take action to remedy them.

7.2

Recommended actions for change will be presented to the Council of Management who will exercise leadership over the Action Plan and review all recommendations for inclusion within the plan.

8. REVIEWING THE GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME AND ACTION PLAN

8.1

The Council of Management will undertake to provide leadership in taking the Action Plan forward within the Trust and will be responsible for providing the necessary resources to be released which are identified as needed to expedite the plan.

8.2.

The Council of Management will undertake to formally oversee progress against the plan on an annual basis.

8.3

The Council of Management will endorse an annual report which is produced and published on the Trust's website showing progress against the plan and how the Trust is meeting its obligations under the Gender Equality Duty.

8.4

The Council of Management will review the Disability Equality Scheme within three years of its inception and oversee the changes and amendments, which need to be made.

9. PROGRESS

9.1

Progress on compliance with the Gender Equality Scheme will be evaluated against the following criteria:

- How much progress is achieved against the Action Plan;
- How effective has the leadership been in taking the plan forward;
- How much has staff expertise in impact assessment increased;
- How many staff show awareness of the Gender Equality Duty, the Gender Equality Scheme and the Gender Equality Action Plan and the role they play in compliance;
- How many complaints involving sexual harassment have been received and been investigated following due process;
- How effective are the changes made to policies and practice, which may have some impact on gender;
- How has an efficient use of resources been demonstrated to meet compliance;
- Has there been sufficient involvement with other partner agencies in drawing up the Gender Equality Scheme;
- Have any changes in procurement practice been identified and made.