



WADHAM COLLEGE

Gender Equality Scheme 2007-2010

1. Introduction

The Equality Act 2006 has introduced new general duties on all public authorities to promote gender equality, following the principles of the Human Rights Act and specific legislation to prevent discrimination on grounds of race, disability, religion or belief, and sexual orientation.

This Gender Equality Scheme aims to promote equality of opportunity and treatment for all men and women working and studying at the College or applying to do so and to ensure equality of access to all services provided by the College.

The Scheme aims to foster an environment in which unlawful discrimination and harassment are not tolerated and where all members of the College community are encouraged to achieve their full potential.

The Scheme outlines the current position, identifies certain examples of steps taken to promote gender equality, and gives the College's key objectives, together with plans to promote gender equality over the next three years.

2. Summary of Key Objectives

- (a) The College will build upon existing arrangements to foster gender equality in all aspects of College life and throughout the College community.
- (b) The College will take active steps to establish good gender balance in decision-making processes in all areas of the College's activities.
- (c) The College will continue research into gender gaps in student admissions and progress, and support the University's research into causes of gender gap in final examinations, where required.
- (d) The College will encourage more women to apply for academic posts, both for College appointments and by supporting the University in this objective for joint appointments.

3. The Legal Context

The legal definition of "public authorities" is very wide, including specifically all UK universities receiving public funding from HEFCE. The individual Colleges of Oxford University are separate private charities that carry out teaching and research in

such close relationship to the University that they are likely to be public authorities too.

The Equality Act 2006 places a general statutory duty on all public authorities to have due regard to the following needs, when carrying out their functions:

- To promote equality of opportunity between men and women.
- To eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment.

Specific Duties

To support progress in delivering the general duty, there are also specific duties imposed on most major public authorities. Although the Colleges of Oxford University have not been designated as subject to the specific duties, the University itself has been so designated and the Colleges wish to endeavour to meet similar standards. The specific duties imposed on each public authority in question include:

- To prepare and publish a gender equality scheme setting out the gender equality objectives and showing how it will meet its general and specific duties.
- In formulating its overall objectives, to consider the need to include objectives to address any causes of any gender gap in pay.
- To gather and use information on the way that its policies and practices affect gender equality both in the workforce and in the delivery of services.
- To consult stakeholders and take account of relevant information in determining the gender equality scheme.
- To assess the impact of its current and proposed policies on gender equality.
- To implement the actions set out in the scheme over three years.
- To report on progress annually and to review the scheme triennially.

4. The College Context

Since the introduction of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the College has taken a number of steps to ensure equality of opportunity and treatment for men and women (staff, students, and visitors). Specific steps include:

- Wadham has a well established Equality Committee which meets once a term (three times per year), and which reports to the Governing Body of the College. Equal opportunities policies and action plans are reviewed annually and data on equal opportunities, and the gender gap in student admissions and progress, is monitored annually.
- The College publishes its regulations and practices to students and staff in the College Handbook to which students must subscribe as a condition of admission to the College and staff as a condition of their contract.
- The College appoints a Tutor for Women and Harassment Advisors for students and staff (both male and female) annually. The SU and MCR also appoint Women's Officers.
- As the College forms a constituent part of the University of Oxford, some of its responsibilities are shared and covered by joint arrangements.

- The Gender Equality Scheme will be overseen by the Equality Committee, which reports to the Governing Body.

5. Key Objectives

(a) Build upon existing arrangements to foster gender equality

Within the context of the University's work in this area, the College's Equality Committee will monitor current arrangements and their impact on gender equality. Although women are not a minority in the College, their interests are considered, and as necessary promoted, in the College's Equality Committee alongside other identified minority groups. The College also encourages staff to attend courses aimed at female career development, such as the University's Springboard programme.

(b) Establish good gender balance

The College has a well-established record of involving women in the corporate life of the College at high level. Of the current senior College Officers, three are women, including the Senior Tutor and Tutor for Admissions, Chaplain and Domestic Bursar. The Governing Body comprises 63 Fellows of which 18 are women.

Both on statutory and on ad hoc committees, the College regards gender balance as an important consideration and strongly prefers to form committees on which men and women are equally represented. Women's interests are specifically represented by the Tutor for Women, who is a Fellow of the College. The College intends to build on this foundation to ensure that the inclusion of more women in decision-making is embedded in College practices.

(c) Research into gender gaps at admission, in progress, and in final examination results for students

Recent research has noted that whilst women undergraduates perform well in final examinations, overall proportionately fewer are awarded first-class degrees.¹ For many subjects at Oxford, the success rates in the award of firsts are broadly similar for men and women, but there are some subjects in both the Arts and the Sciences in which there are distinct differences.

The University's Educational Policy and Standards Committee of Council is monitoring the situation and has supported further research to investigate the causes. The Oxford Admissions Study was commissioned by the University to assess the factors influencing success rates, including gender, in final examination results. The research project, led by Professor Anthony Heath in the Department of Sociology, is tracking the progress of a cohort of students and results will be published after the group has taken their final examinations in 2007. Dr Jane Mellanby (Department of Experimental Psychology) and Dr Ann Pasternak-Slater (English Faculty) are conducting research into the gender gap in finals at the English Faculty. It is hoped

¹ Mellanby, J., Martin, M., O'Doherty, J. 'The 'gender gap' in final examination results at Oxford University', *British Journal of Psychology*, 91/3 (2000)

that the results of both projects will help to pinpoint the causes of the gender imbalance.

An analysis of figures for Wadham suggest that the gender gap is, if anything, slightly more marked than in the University as a whole. Nonetheless the proportion of women (as well as men) receiving first-class degrees is above the University average, and considering the comparatively small data sets, even when three year's results are combined, care should be taken in drawing firm conclusions. Data on the success of students will continue to be collected and analysed by gender in future years to identify any continuing or changing trends.

The gender gap in Finals, both at Wadham and the University as a whole, has been the subject of discussion at a meeting set up by the Wadham SU Women's Officer, and at the College's Tutorial Board. The College's Equality Committee, in light of the comments in the above paragraphs, is monitoring key aspects of student admission and progress with a view to identifying and eliminating gender gaps.

(d) Encourage more women to apply for academic posts

The College is the joint employer with the University for the majority of its permanent academic posts. As such, the University's Gender Equality Scheme (<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/gender/ges.shtml>) is supported by the College. The College recognises and supports the research carried out by the UUK Athena project (<http://www.athenaproject.org.uk/>), which established the concept of Career Development Fellowships, a new type of post designed to provide a stepping stone for those embarking on an academic career. The College has previously offered a CDF in English and will continue to support this scheme as appropriate.

The College will consider all proposals made by the Task Force on Academic Employment (<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/ps/staff/academic/tfnews/index.shtml>) with regard to establishing Career Development Fellowships as part of the formal academic grading structure.

The College will consider undertaking positive steps to encourage women to apply for academic posts at all levels, e.g. the WiSET Initiative, from the Equality Unit of the University of Cambridge (<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/personnel/equality/wiseti/cambridge.html>)

Where academic appointments are made, in cases in which the College is the sole employer they will be made with due regard to the College's Equal Opportunities Policy and with regard to the College's overall commitment to equality of opportunity and to diversity. Such consideration will include equal pay for work of equal value.

6. Students and Gender Equality

- (a) The College participates in the Common Framework for Colleges and Faculties (http://www.admissions.ox.ac.uk/news/common_framework.shtml) and is fully committed to the Code of Practice for Undergraduate Admissions to the Oxford Colleges (<http://www.admissions.ox.ac.uk/guides/cop.shtml>).
- (b) Graduate Admissions are organised centrally by the University. The College supports the University in its efforts to ensure gender equality in the admission

of graduate students, and will support the University in its annual review of Graduate Admissions (<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/gender/ges.shtml>).

- (c) The College will continue to support initiatives such as the development of online training by the Oxford Learning Institute for academics involved in the admissions process.
- (d) The College will make all academic provisions (including study skills training and briefing on successful strategies for examinations) with full recognition of gender equality issues.
- (e) The College will continue to support the University's access initiatives and will develop its own activities to ensure that applications are received from the widest possible field with men and women represented equally.
- (f) The College commits to allocating resources for non-academic student activities on a gender-neutral basis.
- (g) The College monitors the experience of all students through tutors' collections and teaching feedback forms. It encourages the participation of all students in all aspects of College life. Both the alternative prospectus and the website give the contact details of the SU and MCR women's officers, and encourages students to contact them with any welfare issues. The College also has a designated women's room, and the SU frequently holds women's teas. The SU also has an optional tampon levy, which it allows it to provide free tampons to all students. Wadham also has a student-run magazine, *Dorothy's Lip*, which aims to promote the writing of female students. The College fosters an atmosphere where intolerance on grounds of gender is unacceptable.

7. Staff and Gender Equality

The College acts as a joint employer with the University for a number of academic staff and embraces the University's policies and current work on gender equality. These include the Human Resources Strategy to 2009: Rewarding and Developing People at Oxford (<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/ps/staff/strategy/hrstrategy2009.pdf>), and the work of the Task Force on Academic Employment and the Contract Research Staff Working Group.

The College fully supports the staff benefits provided by the University, and has similar arrangements for College-only appointments. Family leave arrangements are generous; maternity leave is well beyond the statutory minimum; and there is recognition of wider family commitments, which has led to the development of policies on paternity, adoption and parental emergency leave. Full details of the policies are set out in the College and University staff handbooks. (<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/ps/staff/handbooks/>)

The College has appointed both male and female Harassment Advisors, who are Fellows of the College.

Staff are encouraged to undertake training and professional development throughout their career at the College. Such opportunities are available to all members of staff. The College seeks to ensure gender balance on all selection committees.

8. Monitoring and Reporting

The University monitors and publishes data on student admission and staff numbers, including joint appointments.

The College monitors data on applications for College-only posts. Selection Committee reports are made given to the Governing Body, which give details of the number of applicants by gender.

Responses from students, staff and visitors to the College are regularly sought in formal and informal ways. Such responses are audited for gender equality and issues raised in this area are reported to the relevant officers for action.

9. Action Plan

(FOR CONSIDERATION BY EQUALITY COMMITTEE)

- (a) Carry out an equal pay audit and gender audit and report to the Governing Body.
- (b) Review all current College policies to ensure gender equality objectives are being met and report to the Governing Body.
- (c) Review all trusts and special funds that currently have a gender restriction for beneficiaries, to determine whether that specification could appropriately be removed (on application to the Charity Commission if necessary).
- (d) Ensure that statutory committees and other meetings are scheduled with regard for the family and caring responsibilities of the committee members.
- (e) Allocate a training budget to enable the commitments in the plan to be fulfilled.
- (f) Review this Gender Equality Scheme in the context of any review of the University's Gender Equality Scheme.