



EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY AND CODES OF PRACTICE

The Lifesigns Group is committed in its pursuit of academic excellence to equality of opportunity and to a pro-active and inclusive approach to equality, which supports and encourages all under-represented groups, promotes an inclusive culture, and values diversity.

For staff, entry into employment with the Group and progression within employment will be determined only by personal merit and by the application of criteria which are related to the duties and conditions of each particular post and the needs of the institution concerned.

Subject to statutory provisions no applicant for admission as a student, or for a staff appointment, or student, or member of staff, will be treated less favourably than another on the grounds of sex (including gender reassignment), marital or parental status, race, ethnic or national origin, colour, disability, sexual orientation, religion, or age. For students, ability to meet the requirements of the selection criteria for competitive admission and for staff, ability to perform the job, will be the primary consideration.

If any person admitted as a student or appointed as an employee considers that he or she is suffering from unequal treatment on any of the above grounds in his or her admission, appointment, or progression through the Group, he or she may make a complaint, which will be dealt with through the agreed procedures for complaints or grievances or the procedures for dealing with bullying and harassment, as appropriate.

The Group will take active steps to promote good practice. In particular it will:

- Promote equality of opportunity
- Promote good relations between people of different racial groups, between women and men and between disabled and non-disabled people
- Have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination on grounds of race, sex, disability, and all other grounds set out in the statement on equal opportunities
- Subject its policies to continuous assessment in order to examine how they affect all under-represented groups, especially ethnic minority students and staff, women, and disabled students and staff, and to identify whether its policies help to achieve equality of opportunity for all these groups, or whether they have an adverse impact
- Monitor the recruitment and progress of all students and staff, paying particular attention to the recruitment and progress of ethnic minority students and staff, women, and disabled students and staff.
- Promote an inclusive culture, good practice in teaching, learning, and assessment, and good management practice, through the development of codes of best practice, policies, and training.
- Take positive action wherever possible to support this policy and its aims.
- Publish this policy widely amongst staff and students, together with policy assessments and results of monitoring.



The Group will meet all statutory obligations under relevant legislation and, where appropriate, anticipate future legal requirements signalled under EU Directives. The Group's policy is guided by:

- Equal Pay Act (1970)
- Sex Discrimination Act (1975)
- Race Relations Act (1976)
- Disability Discrimination Act (1995)
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001)
- Human Rights Act (1998)
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000)
- EU Equal Treatment Framework Directive (2000/78)

And, in addition, the Codes of Practice issued by the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Commission for Racial Equality, together with the Codes of Practice on Disability and Age Diversity. These Codes are not legally binding (though they are admissible as evidence in Employment Tribunals) and the Group supports them fully.

The policy will be amended as appropriate to meet the demands of future legislation.