HARROW INDEPENDENT COLLEGE
School of Mathematics, Science & Economics

HIC Gender Equality Plan (GEP)

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Gender Equality Plan

Harrow Independent College (HIC) is committed to promoting equality, diversity, inclusion, and fairness across all aspects of college life. This Gender Equality Plan (GEP) sets out the College's strategic commitment to advancing gender equality where all individuals have the opportunity to achieve their full potential. HIC expresses its opposition to all forms of inequality and discrimination.

HIC recognises that equality of opportunity and inclusive participation are fundamental to educational excellence, research quality, innovation, staff wellbeing, and student success. The College aims to create and sustain an environment where all individuals—regardless of gender identity, gender expression, sex, sexual orientation, caring responsibilities, pregnancy or maternity status, marital status, or transgender status—are treated with dignity and respect and are able to realise their full potential.

This GEP establishes a framework for:

- Promoting gender equality in employment, governance, teaching, research, and student participation;
- Preventing discrimination, harassment, bullying, and gender-based violence;
- Supporting equal career progression and professional development;
- Improving representation and participation across all levels of the organisation;
- Embedding equality considerations into institutional policies and decision-making;
- Monitoring progress through measurable objectives and regular review.

This document aligns with:

- The Equality Act 2010 (UK);
- The UK Public Sector Equality Duty principles;
- Horizon Europe eligibility requirements for public bodies, research organisations, and higher education establishments;
- Relevant safeguarding, employment, and educational legislation.

2. Institutional Commitment

HIC is committed to:

1. Fostering a culture of equality, diversity, inclusion, and mutual respect;
2. Ensuring fair recruitment, retention, progression, and reward practices;
3. Supporting staff and students with protected characteristics;
4. Addressing structural and cultural barriers that may disadvantage individuals based on gender;
5. Maintaining a safe environment free from harassment, discrimination, victimisation, and gender-based violence;
6. Promoting inclusive leadership and representation;
7. Supporting work-life balance and flexible working arrangements;
8. Ensuring transparency and accountability in equality-related matters.

HIC expects all governors, senior leaders, staff, students, contractors, and partners to uphold these commitments.

3. Scope

This GEP applies to:

- All employees of the HIC, including teaching staff, support staff, leadership staff, researchers, temporary workers, apprentices, and volunteers;
- All enrolled students;
- Governors and trustees;
- Visiting academics, contractors, and external collaborators engaged in College activities.

The Plan covers all College activities including:

- Recruitment and employment;
- Teaching and learning;
- Research and innovation activities;
- Student support and enrichment;
- Governance and decision-making;
- Partnerships and external engagement.

4. Governance and Responsibility

4.1 Oversight

Overall responsibility for implementation of this GEP rests with the Principal, supported by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the Governing Body.

4.2 Equality Lead

The College shall designate a senior member of staff as Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Leader with responsibility for:

- Coordinating implementation of the GEP;
- Monitoring progress against objectives;
- Advising senior leadership;
- Supporting equality-related training and awareness;
- Producing annual progress reports.

4.3 Governance Structure

The Governing Body shall:

- Receive periodic updates on equality objectives and progress;
- Review gender equality indicators;
- Ensure accountability and compliance with relevant legislation and funding obligations.

Managers across all departments are responsible for implementing the principles of this GEP within their areas of responsibility.

5. Publication and Resourcing

This Gender Equality Plan shall:

- Be formally approved by the College Governing Body and/or Senior Leadership Team;
- Be published on the College website;
- Be communicated internally to staff and students;
- Be reviewed at least every four years, with annual monitoring updates.

The College commits to allocating reasonable resources to support implementation, including:

- Staff time;
- Training and development activities;
- Data collection and monitoring processes;
- Equality-related initiatives and awareness programmes.

6. Data Collection and Monitoring

The College recognises the importance of evidence-based decision-making.

The College will collect, analyse, and monitor relevant gender-disaggregated data where appropriate and lawful, including:

- Staff recruitment and retention;
- Promotion and career progression;
- Pay and reward;
- Participation in training and professional development;
- Student recruitment, achievement, retention, and progression;
- Complaints relating to discrimination, harassment, bullying, or misconduct;
- Representation in leadership and governance.

Data will be reviewed periodically to:

- Identify trends or disparities;
- Inform policy development and interventions;
- Support continuous improvement.

All data handling shall comply with UK GDPR and data protection legislation.

7. Key Priority Areas and Actions

Priority Area 1: Gender Equality in Recruitment, Retention and Career Progression

Objective

To ensure fair and inclusive employment practices that promote equal opportunity and reduce barriers to progression.

Actions

- Review recruitment and selection procedures to ensure fairness and inclusivity;
- Encourage diverse applicant pools through inclusive advertising and outreach;
- Ensure recruitment panels are appropriately trained in equality, diversity, and unconscious bias awareness;
- Monitor recruitment, promotion, and retention data by gender;
- Support transparent promotion and appraisal processes;
- Promote flexible working arrangements where operationally feasible;
- Support staff returning from maternity leave, adoption leave, parental leave, or long-term caring responsibilities.

Indicators of Progress

- Gender balance across staffing groups;
- Recruitment and promotion outcomes monitored annually;
- Uptake of flexible working arrangements;
- Staff survey results relating to inclusion and fairness.

Priority Area 2: Leadership and Decision-Making

Objective

To improve equality and diversity in leadership, governance, and decision-making structures.

Actions

- Encourage gender diversity in leadership positions and committees;
- Promote equitable opportunities for leadership development;
- Monitor gender representation within governance and management structures;
- Support mentoring and professional development opportunities.

Indicators of Progress

- Gender representation in leadership roles and committees;
- Participation in leadership development initiatives;
- Staff perceptions of fairness and inclusion.

Priority Area 3: Work-Life Balance and Wellbeing

Objective

To support staff wellbeing and work-life balance through inclusive and supportive policies.

Actions

- Promote awareness of flexible working policies;
- Support family-friendly working practices;
- Ensure policies relating to maternity, paternity, adoption, parental leave, menopause, and caring responsibilities are accessible and regularly reviewed;
- Promote staff wellbeing initiatives;
- Encourage a supportive and respectful workplace culture.

Indicators of Progress

- Staff retention rates;
- Employee wellbeing survey feedback;
- Uptake of flexible working and family-related leave.

Priority Area 4: Prevention of Harassment, Bullying, and Gender-Based Violence

Objective

To maintain a safe and respectful environment free from harassment, discrimination, bullying, sexual misconduct, and gender-based violence.

Actions

- Maintain clear policies and reporting procedures;
- Provide safeguarding and equality training to staff and students;
- Promote awareness of expected standards of conduct;
- Ensure complaints are handled promptly, fairly, and confidentially;
- Support affected individuals appropriately.

Indicators of Progress

- Training completion rates;
- Awareness of reporting mechanisms;
- Monitoring of complaints and resolution outcomes.

Priority Area 5: Gender Equality in Teaching, Learning, and Research

Objective

To promote inclusive educational and research practices.

Actions

- Encourage inclusive teaching materials and learning environments;
- Promote equal participation in STEM and other subject areas where gender imbalance exists;
- Support participation in research and innovation activities regardless of gender;
- Encourage consideration of gender dimensions where relevant in research and project design;
- Promote equality and inclusion awareness among students.

Indicators of Progress

- Participation and attainment data by gender;
- Student feedback;
- Representation in enrichment, research, and leadership activities.

Priority Area 6: Training and Awareness

Objective

To build institutional awareness and capability relating to equality, diversity, and inclusion.

Actions

- Provide equality, diversity, safeguarding, and anti-harassment training;
- Promote awareness of unconscious bias and inclusive practices;
- Include equality considerations within staff induction processes;
- Provide periodic refresher training.

Indicators of Progress

- Staff participation in training;
- Increased awareness reflected in surveys and feedback.

8. Communication and Engagement

The College will communicate this GEP through:

- Publication on the College website;
- Staff induction and training;
- Internal communications;
- Student and staff engagement activities.

The College will encourage participation and feedback from staff and students to support continuous improvement.

9. Monitoring, Review and Reporting

Progress against this GEP shall be monitored annually by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead and reported to the Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body.

The annual review may include:

- Analysis of equality-related data;
- Progress against objectives and actions;
- Review of inclusion policy

Next Review: June 2027

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