



**MERTON COLLEGE**  
**SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME**  
**2021-24**

## **Aim of the Single Equality Scheme**

Merton College aims to provide an inclusive environment which promotes equality, values diversity, and maintains a working, learning and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all its Fellows, staff and students are respected to assist them in reaching their full potential. The College will work to remove any barriers which might deter people of the highest potential and ability from applying to study or work at Merton College.

Our aim is to embed equality in the culture and systems of the College by ensuring that policy making, service delivery and employment practice are all equality oriented.

The Single Equality Scheme, which supersedes previous Equal Opportunities Policies, sets out the specific objectives the College has set to promote equality, and reports progress against these objectives. It is published on the College website and is incorporated into the Staff Handbook; Fellows and Lecturers' Handbook; and the College Handbook (for junior members).

## **About Merton College**

Merton College, the first fully self-governing College in the University, was founded in 1264 by Walter de Merton. Today it is one of the 38 independent, self-governing colleges of the University of Oxford. It is also a Registered Charity, under the Charity Commission.

From the initial foundation of twenty male fellows, Merton has expanded over the years to a diverse community which today comprises 290 undergraduates, 300 graduates, 69 Governing Body Fellows, 47 Lecturers across a range of academic disciplines supported by 108 non-academic staff, plus 16 casual staff.

The College's aims for the public benefit include achieving the highest outcomes in education, learning and research at national and international level. This in turn requires a firm commitment to equality of opportunity, so that the College considers every possible source of talent.

## **College Governance and the Single Equality Scheme**

It is the responsibility of the Governing Body to provide the mechanisms and resources through which the College's strategic objectives for equality and diversity can be delivered. To support this work, the College established an Equality Forum in June 2011. Its remit is to:

- consider all existing and emerging equality legislation with a view to identifying relevant issues, which are then translated into key College policies for approval by the Governing Body;
- facilitate consultation with specific groups of staff and students;
- identify equality-related training needs of specific groups of staff and students;
- provide monitoring of key strategic issues; and
- draft publications for approval by the Governing Body as appropriate.

The Committee is chaired by the Warden and convened by the Senior Tutor with the following other members: the Domestic Bursar, the Principal of the Postmasters, the Chaplain, a Fellow, the Equality Advisor, the Academic Registrar, a College Lecturer, two JCR representatives drawn from the five JCR Equality Reps, two MCR representatives drawn from the Welfare Reps and the five Equality Officers, two members of staff from different departments, and an external member. It meets once per term and reports to the Governing Body to which it makes a formal report once a year.

All College Committees are responsible for ensuring that this Scheme is embedded in their duties and functions in relation to both students and staff.

The Senior Tutor (with respect to academic matters) and the Domestic Bursar (with respect to non-academic matters) are responsible for the day to day implementation and delivery of the College's strategic objectives for equality and diversity in accordance with the guidance attached to this policy.

The Domestic Bursar also has primary responsibility for facilitating the accessibility of the College's buildings for disabled users.

The Harassment Advisors may provide informal advice in the first instance to any member of staff or student prior to bringing any complaint or grievance about harassment.

### **Publication and Dissemination of the Single Equality Scheme**

The Single Equality Scheme is published on the College website and is incorporated into the Staff Handbook; Fellows and Lecturers' Handbook; and the *College Handbook* (for junior members).

Merton's approach to equality is outlined to new members of College as part of induction. For junior members, this means that equality awareness is included in Freshers' talks and events. Line managers are responsible for covering equality within induction for non-academic staff.

Other areas within the College that need to take account of the College's Single Equality Scheme include:

- Partnership arrangements, where the College will make clear to partner organisations its duties under the Equality Act 2010.
- Procurement, where the College will be expected to ensure that procurement processes take account of the requirements of this Scheme, and that contractors/suppliers understand and comply with the duties required of the College.
- Communications, including the way that the College communicates to Fellows, students and staff, and potential applicants to study or work at Merton College (e.g. in hard copy, electronic media) in such a way that complies with the spirit of this scheme.
- Managers and supervisors will be expected to be familiar with the provisions of the Scheme and its implications for the areas that they manage or supervise.

## Single Equality Scheme: Legal Context

The Equality Act requires the College to publish relevant, proportionate information showing compliance with the Equality Duty on a yearly basis and also to publish at least one measurable objective that it thinks it should achieve to meet any of the three aims of the equality duty. The College achieves this through the Single Equality Scheme.

The Equality Act came into force in October 2010 and has two main purposes – to harmonise discrimination law and to strengthen the law to support progress on equality. Discrimination law protects people on the basis of the following eight protected characteristics: (in alphabetical order)

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

It also applies to marriage and civil partnerships, but only in respect of the requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination in employment. Merton College is subject to the Equality Act 2010 as an education provider, employer and provider of goods, facilities and services.

In providing a public function, the College has a *general duty* to:

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct which the Act prohibits;
2. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not;
3. Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not.

To address point 2 – that is, to advance equality of opportunity – the College must have due regard to the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different to the needs of the persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

To address point 3 – that is, to foster good relations – the College must have due regard to the need to:

- Tackle prejudice and

- Promote understanding

As Merton College is part of the University of Oxford, it is important that this document should be read in conjunction with the University's approach to Equality and Diversity which is described at <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/>.

### **Equality Objectives**

Please see Appendix 1 for an overview of the College's equality objectives.

### **Equality Information**

The College will ensure that it publishes information to comply with its public equality sector duty.

See Appendix 2 for information on race, gender, and disability related to Merton staff and students.

### **Further Information**

Further information about the College's approach to equality for current or prospective staff can be obtained from the Human Resources Manager.

Further information about provisions for students can be obtained from the Academic Office.

### **Review**

The Single Equality Scheme is reviewed annually, and updated every three years.

Adopted 2012; updated 2015, 2018 and 2021

## Appendix 1 Merton College Equality Objectives – revised Trinity Term 2021

### Current Objectives

Objective	Actions required	Equality Strands	Lead Responsibility	Start Date	Target Completion Date	Specific outcomes and outputs
Civil marriages and partnerships	License a room, decide when it will be available / who will be responsible for bookings, and advertise its availability	Sexual orientation, Religion	Chaplain/ Domestic Bursar	TT21		A room licensed for use
Multi-faith prayer room / quiet room	Liaise with faith groups in College, identify a suitable room, and advertise its availability	Religion, Disability	Chaplain/ Domestic Bursar	TT21		A room available for use
College Nursery	Establish and promote a nursery for use by College members	Pregnancy and maternity	HR Manager / Domestic Bursar	TT21		Creation of a nursery
Encourage more undergraduate applications to Oxford from Black and Minority Ethnic candidates, and provide support for on-course BAME students	Develop new outreach activities to diversify the student body, including to encourage more applications from students from BAME backgrounds	Race	Senior Tutor	TT21		Participation in Social Mobility Foundation
Promote use of Merton's graphic identity	Check that graphic identity still	Disability	Academic Registrar/	TT21	TT22	College-wide adoption of graphic identity

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Actions required</b>	<b>Equality Strands</b>	<b>Lead Responsibility</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>Target Completion Date</b>	<b>Specific outcomes and outputs</b>
guidelines which comply with RNIB standards.	represents best practice  Promote its use across College		Development Director			
Improve diversity of academic and non-academic staff	Consider recruitment strategy and process for different groups of employees  Regularly review recruitment monitoring statistics	All	HR Manager/ Senior Tutor	TT21		
Improved integration of equality matters in Staff, MCR and JCR meetings.	Annual standing item at the termly Staff meeting regarding the Single Equality Scheme and the current year's objective(s).  MCR and JCR to give consideration to mechanisms for feeding back to junior members on Equality Forum discussions and related equality issues	All	Senior Tutor / Domestic Bursar / HR Manager / Student reps	October 2016	2018-19	

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Actions required</b>	<b>Equality Strands</b>	<b>Lead Responsibility</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>Target Completion Date</b>	<b>Specific outcomes and outputs</b>
Enhance the identification and provision of equality training for academic and non-academic staff	To consider provision of unconscious bias training suitable for different groups (students, support staff and academics)  To continue provision of trans awareness training for support staff	All	Domestic Bursar / Senior Tutor	Ongoing	Progress to be reviewed in TT22	Identify training courses for staff, students and fellows  Trans Awareness training for staff provided in 2018 and 2021
Take steps to address the "gender gap" in Finals and at FPE.	Ongoing review of student progress and examination results at Warden & Tutors' Committee and Governing Body.  Ongoing discussions with Tutors and with junior members.	Gender	Senior Tutor	October 2013	Progress to be reviewed in May 2019	To date: Information session with Professor Mellanby has taken place; Springboard has been promoted to junior members; extensive discussion and analysis of data at Warden & Tutors' Committee and Governing Body.  'Gender Gap' discussion forum with students and tutors in TT17 led to two events for women students in HT18 co-organised by JCR.
Take steps to increase diversity in portraiture	Working group of Equality Forum and Pictures & Chattels Sub-Committee to be	All	Librarian (Chair of Pictures & Chattels Sub-Committee)	November 2016	TT22	



<b>Objective</b>	<b>Actions required</b>	<b>Equality Strands</b>	<b>Lead Responsibility</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>Target Completion Date</b>	<b>Specific outcomes and outputs</b>
	formed to investigate and report back.					
Improve accessibility of the MCR	Improve physical access to MCR facilities for disabled students	Disability	Estates Bursar and Domestic Bursar	November 2018	TT22	
Gender Pay Gap	Continue to monitor gender pay gap data at Equality Forum	Gender	HR Manager	Ongoing		

### **Completed/Achieved Objectives**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Equality Strands</b>	<b>Lead Responsibility</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>Specific outcomes and outputs</b>
Develop a College maternity leave policy for junior members.	Gender	Senior Tutor	May 2012	June 2012	Formal policy in place documenting the College's support for junior members during pregnancy and maternity leave.
Encourage more undergraduate applications to Oxford from Black and Minority Ethnic candidates through the KICC outreach project.	Race	Schools Liaison and Access Officer	January 2012	September 2013	Activity in 2012-13 included contribution to a major conference and a follow up programme of visits.

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Equality Strands</b>	<b>Lead Responsibility</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>Specific outcomes and outputs</b>
Ensure Merton's graphic identity guidelines comply with RNIB standards.	Disability	Development Director	October 2012	June 2013	Merton's graphic identity is compliant with RNIB standards.
Provide level access to Rose Lane 5.	Disability	Estates Bursar	October 2013	October 2013	Level access to Rose Lane 5 provided.
Promote awareness of Merton's adapted suite in Grove and in Holywell.	Disability	Senior Tutor	October 2011	October 2015	Awareness promoted via University networks, College publications, and social media.
Set up a high-profile annual event on Equality at Merton.	All	Senior Tutor/ Equality Adviser	October 2013	February 2014	The Merton Equality Conversation has taken place annually since 2014. Speakers and themes have included: Dame Athene Donald speaking on gender; Sir Trevor Philips speaking on race; Peter Tatchell speaking on sexual orientation; Lord Puttnam on a duty of care; and a panel discussion on Muslim women's identities in Britain today.
Provide services of thanksgiving and blessing after civil marriages and civil partnerships	Sexual orientation	Chaplain	2013	2015	The College offers services of thanksgiving and blessing after civil marriages and civil partnerships: <a href="http://www.merton.ox.ac.uk/alumni-information">http://www.merton.ox.ac.uk/alumni-information</a>
Develop the effectiveness of the College Equality Forum established in Trinity Term 2011, thereby meeting the College's specific duty under the Equality Act 2010 to publish	All	Senior Tutor/ Domestic Bursar	May 2015	May 2016	Formal staff, JCR, and MCR reports added to the agenda as standing items at each termly meeting of the Equality Forum.

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Equality Strands</b>	<b>Lead Responsibility</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>Specific outcomes and outputs</b>
relevant, proportionate information that demonstrates the College's progress towards its equality objectives.					<p>Formal mechanism established for reporting equality-related considerations from other College committees.</p> <p>One of the two Student Harassment Advisors now a member of the Forum.</p> <p>Standing item added to the agenda of the Michaelmas Term meeting of the Equality Forum to review Equality Objectives and associated actions.</p>
Establish a Girls' Choir	Gender	Chaplain and Director of Music	2015	September 2016	Provision to girls of the same opportunities for singing within a collegiate setting as have previously only been available to boys.
Raise awareness of Merton's equality work amongst non-academic staff	All	HR Manager / Domestic Bursar	May 2016	October 2016	Equality incorporated into the HR Manager's induction programme.
Install a ramp between the Ante-Chapel and the Chapel	Disability	Estates Bursar	2015	November 2016	Provision of wheelchair access to the Chapel via permanent ramp.
Consider development of a parental leave policy for fixed-term academic Fellows.	Pregnancy Maternity	Senior Tutor and Sub Warden	October 2015	April 2017	Amendment to Bylaw.
Enable access to the Hall and SCR via lift in Patey's Quad.	Disability	Estates Bursar	January 2016	July 2017	Installation of lift in Patey's Quad.

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Equality Strands</b>	<b>Lead Responsibility</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>Specific outcomes and outputs</b>
Provision of access to the Academic Office	Disability	Estates Bursar and Domestic Bursar	2017	Summer 2018	Provision of wheelchair access to the Academic Office via permanent ramp.
Take steps to increase support for BAME students at Merton	Race	Equality Advisor	May 2016	October 2018	Participation in Conference of Colleges BME focus group.  Participation in tri-College collaboration.  Funding agreed for events organised by tri-College network.
Create provision for gender-neutral toilets in College	Gender	Domestic Bursar	October 2015	November 2019	Mob 2 and Fitzjames facilities re-designated 'all gender'

## Appendix 2

### Merton College Staff Equality Data 2012

<b>Disability</b>	<b>Merton Support Staff</b>	<b>Merton Academic Staff</b>
Staff with a disability	16%	0%
Staff without a disability	84%	100%

Information based on voluntary questionnaire administered in Hilary 2012

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Merton Support Staff</b>	<b>Merton Academic Staff</b>
Female	58%	27%
Male	42%	73%

Information relates to all staff.

<b>Ethnic Origin</b>	<b>Merton Support Staff</b>	<b>Merton Academic Staff</b>
White	93%	92%
Other	7%	8%

Information based on voluntary questionnaire administered in Hilary 2012

## Merton College Staff Equality Data 2016

	<b>Support Staff</b>	<b>Academic Staff</b>	<b>Total Staff</b>
Response rate	54%	43%	49%

<b>Disability</b>	<b>Merton Support Staff</b>	<b>Merton Academic Staff</b>	<b>Total Staff</b>
Staff with a disability or long term medical condition	3%	0%	2%
Staff without a disability or long term medical condition	85%	97%	89%
Prefer not to say	12%	3%	8%

Information based on voluntary questionnaire administered in Hilary 2016

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Merton Support Staff</b>	<b>Merton Academic Staff</b>	<b>Total Staff</b>
Female	74%	33%	60%
Male	26%	64%	39%

Information based on voluntary questionnaire administered in Hilary 2016

<b>Ethnic Origin</b>	<b>Merton Support Staff</b>	<b>Merton Academic Staff</b>	<b>Total Staff</b>
White	90%	97%	93%
Other (including prefer not to say)	10%	3%	7%

Information based on voluntary questionnaire administered in Hilary 2016

\* Numbers are redacted for reasons of data protection.

NB It is not compulsory to answer the questions, so numbers do not always total 100%

## Merton College Students Equality Data 2016

Student population	574
Responses	186
Percentage response rate	32%

Current level of study	
Undergraduate	63%
Graduate - PGT	6%
Graduate - PGR	31%

Gender	
Female	52%
Male	47%
Prefer not to say	*

Age	
Under 18	*
18-25	82%
26-30	13%
31-35	4%
36-40	*
41-45	*
46-50	*
51-55	*
56-60	*
61-65	*
66-70	*
71+	*
Prefer not to say	*

Marriage and Civil Partnership	
Married	5%
Civil partnership	*
Not married or in civil partnership	93%
Prefer not to say	*

Disability	
Disability or long term medical condition? Yes	10%
Disability or long term medical condition? No	85%
Prefer not to say	5%

Sexual Orientation	
Bisexual	14%
Gay man	*
Gay woman / lesbian	*
Heterosexual	67%
Other	*
Prefer not to say	8%

Ethnic Origin	
White	83%
Black or Black British - Caribbean	*
Black or Black British - African	*
Other Black Background	*
Asian or Asian British - Indian	*
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	*
Asian or Asian British-Bangladeshi	*
Chinese	3%
Other Asian Background	*
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	*
Arab	*
Mixed White and Black Caribbean	*
White and Black African	*
White and Asian	*
Other mixed background	3%
Any Other Ethnic Origin	*
Prefer not to say	*

Religion or belief (including lack of belief)	
Atheist	23%
Buddhist	*
Christian	30%
Hindu	*
Islam	*
Jain	*
Jewish	*
Sikh	*
Spiritualism	*
Any other	*
No religion	38%
Prefer not to say	4%

\* Numbers are redacted for reasons of data protection