

South Eastern Regional College
Screening Form – Raising Concerns – (formerly
whistleblowing policy)

Background

Under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the FE Sector is required to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:

- between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, or sexual orientation.
- between men and women generally.
- between persons with a disability and persons without; and,
- between persons with dependents and persons without.

Without prejudice to the obligations set out above, the FE Sector is also required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, or racial group.

Screening

The screening procedure should lead to one of two conclusions:

- The policy being screened does not have a significant impact on equality of opportunity and therefore does not require an EQIA.
- The policy being screened has (or is likely to have) a significant impact on equality of opportunity and will require an EQIA.

Screening Date: 26 October 2021

Scoping the Policy

Title of Policy:

Raising Concerns Policy

Is this an existing, revised or a new policy? New Policy

Aim and Description of Policy –

The aim of this policy is to provide individuals with a process to facilitate the reporting of concerns of suspected wrongdoing within the College and highlight the protection afforded to those who disclose concerns under the Disclosure Order.

Who owns and who implements the policy? Chief Human Resources Officer

1.1 Implementation factors

(a) What are the factors that would detract from the achievement of the aims of the policy?

Are they:- please tick

- ✓ Financial
- ✓ Legislation
- ✓ Communication
Staff Development
- ✓ Consistent approach
- Other – please specify: -

b) What action is necessary to ensure that the aims/outcomes of the policy are met?

- Policy is communicated to all staff and publicised on intranet / student portal.
- Staff / managers are provided with information and instruction.
- Regular review of policy.

1.2 Main stakeholders affected.

Who are the internal and external stakeholders (actual or potential) that the policy will impact upon and who need to be consulted with as part of the equality consultation.

- ✓ Governing Body
- ✓ Managing/staff
- ✓ Staff
- ✓ Students/service users
Other public sector organisations
- ✓ Voluntary/community/trade unions

Other, please specify:- Contractors, Suppliers, Members of the Public

Detail any consultation that has taken place with stakeholders.

None

1.3 Other college policies that relate to this policy

Policies:-	College/Sector
Anti-Fraud Policy and Fraud Response Plan	College
Grievance Policy Non-Teaching Staff and Grievance Policy Lecturing Staff	College
SERC Financial Regulations	College
College Complaints and Complements Policy	College
DEL Financial Memorandum FE 1/08	
Public Interest Disclosure (NI) Order 1998	

What evidence/information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy? Specify details below.

None

1.5 Needs, experiences and priorities

Taking into account the information referred to above, what considerations are essential to ensure those in the following categories can achieve fair participation in relation to this policy, and what actions the College will take to address these consideration(s)?

Section 75 category	Details of needs/experience/priorities	
	Consideration	Actions to promote equality.*
Religious belief	No adverse impact as policy meets the requirements and applies to all Staff, Students and interested parties equally	Mandatory Staff Development via Learning Engine Student Induction Sessions Information available in websites
Political opinion	As above	As above
Racial group	As above	As above
Age	As above	As above
Marital status	As above	As above
Sexual orientation	As above	As above
Gender	As above	As above
Disability	As above	As above
Dependency	As above	As Above

*considerations may include flexibility to facilitate the needs of an individual (timetabling for those with young children); adjustments to facilitate those with a disability (alternative formats); provision of facilities to address needs (prayer room)

Part 2

Introduction

Having collated relevant information in relation to Part 1, it is now necessary to use this information when making a decision as to whether or not there is a need to carry out an equality impact assessment.

In assessing the questions in Section 2 it will be necessary to determine the impact of the policy in respect of Section 75.

If the college's conclusion is that there is a major in respect of one or more of the Section 75 equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, then consideration should be given to subjecting the policy to the equality impact assessment procedure.

If the college's conclusion is that there is a minor in respect of one or more of the Section 75 equality categories and/or good relations categories, then consideration should still be given to proceeding with an equality impact assessment, or to:

- Implement measures to mitigate the adverse impact; or
- the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

If the college's conclusion is that there is no impact, i.e. none in respect of all of the Section 75 equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, then the College may decide to screen the policy out. If a policy is "screened out" as having no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations, the College should give details of the reasons for the decision taken.

In favour of a 'major' impact

- a) The policy is significant in terms of its strategic importance;
- b) Potential equality impacts are unknown, because, for example, there is insufficient data upon which to make an assessment or because they are complex, and it would be appropriate to conduct an equality impact assessment in order to better assess them;
- c) Potential equality and/or good relations impacts are likely to be adverse or are likely to be experienced disproportionately by groups of people including those who are marginalised or disadvantaged;
- d) Further assessment offers a valuable way to examine the evidence and develop recommendations in respect of a policy about which there are concerns amongst affected individuals and representative groups, for example in respect of multiple identities;
- e) The policy is likely to be challenged by way of judicial review;
- f) The policy is significant in terms of expenditure.

In favour of 'minor' impact

- a) The policy is not unlawfully discriminatory and any residual potential impacts on people are judged to be negligible;
- b) The policy, or certain proposals within it, are potentially unlawfully discriminatory, but this possibility can readily and easily be eliminated by making appropriate changes to the policy or by adopting appropriate mitigating measures;

c) Any asymmetrical equality impacts caused by the policy are intentional because they are specifically designed to promote equality of opportunity for particular groups of disadvantaged people;

d) By amending the policy there are better opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

In favour of none

a) The policy has no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations.

b) The policy is purely technical in nature and will have no bearing in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations for people within the equality and good relations categories.

Taking into account the evidence presented above, consider and comment on the likely impact on equality of opportunity and good relations for those affected by this policy, in any way, for each of the equality and good relations categories, by applying the screening questions given overleaf and indicate the level of impact on the group i.e. minor, major or none.

2.0 Screening questions

What is the likely adverse impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories? (major/ minor/ none)

Section 75 category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact? Major/minor/none
Religious belief	No adverse impact as policy meets the requirements and applies to all Staff, students, and interested parties equally	none
Political opinion	As above	none
Racial group	As above	none
Age	As above	none
Marital status	As above	none
Sexual orientation	As above	none
Gender	As above	none
Disability	As above	none
Dependency	As above	none

2.0 Are there opportunities to better promote quality of opportunity for people within Section 75 equalities categories?

Groups	Yes	No
Religious belief		This policy sets out the arrangements to meet all criteria relating to Raising Concerns. All staff, students and interested parties will have free access to the policy on the College intranet.
Political opinion		As above
Racial group		As above
Age		As above
Marital status		As above
Sexual orientation		As above
Gender		As above
Disability		As above
Dependency		As above

3(b). To what extent is the policy likely to adversely impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group? Minor/major/none

Good relations	Details of policy impact	Level of impact major/minor/none
Religious belief	There is no likely adverse impact on good relations between people of different belief.	None
Political opinion	There is no likely adverse impact on good relations between people of different political opinion or racial group.	None
Racial group	There is no likely adverse impact on good relations between people of different racial group	None

4(a). Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

Yes **No**

If yes please indicate which group(s) below:

Groups	Yes	No
Religious belief		This policy sets out the arrangements to meet all criteria relating to the policy.
Political opinion		As above
Racial group		As above

5.0 Is there better opportunity to promote positive attitudes towards people with a disability or encourage participation of people with a disability in public life? (as required by DDA 1995 as amended)

	If Yes, provide details	If No, provide reasons
Disability		Policy sets out the arrangements to meet the

		statutory requirements in relation to the policy.
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Part 3 Screening decision

Option 1 (no impact)	If the decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment, please provide details of the reasons.	No adverse impact as policy outlines the relevant requirements in relation to the policy and affects all staff, students and interested parties equally.
Option 2 (minor impact)	If the decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment the public authority should consider if the policy should be mitigated, or an alternative policy be introduced.	
Option 3 (major impact)	If the decision is to subject the policy to an equality impact assessment, please provide details of the reasons.	

If Option 1 is identified proceed to Part 4 of the form.

If Option 2 is identified proceed to 3.1 Mitigation (minor impact).

If Option 3 is identified proceed to 3.2 EQIA - Timetabling and prioritising

3.1 Mitigation (minor impact)

When the college concludes that the likely impact is ‘minor’ and an equality impact assessment is not to be conducted, the college may consider mitigation to lessen the severity of any negative equality impact, or the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity or good relations.

Can the policy/decision be amended or changed, or an alternative policy introduced to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations?

Yes/No (please delete as appropriate). If no, please proceed to 3.2

If yes, give the reasons to support your decision, together with the proposed changes/amendments or alternative policy.

The actions to be taken forward to mitigate the impact of this policy decision are as follows:

If No, please proceed to 3.2 as an EQIA is necessary.

3.2 EQIA - Timetabling and prioritising

An EQIA is a mechanism, where existing and proposed policies are assessed in order to determine whether they have an adverse impact on equality of opportunity for the relevant Section 75 categories EQIA's require the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data.

Factors to be considered in timetabling and prioritising policies for equality impact assessment.

If the policy has been 'screened in' for equality impact assessment, then please answer the following questions to determine its priority for timetabling the equality impact assessment.

On a scale of 1-3, with 1 being the lowest priority and 3 being the highest, assess the policy in terms of its priority for equality impact assessment.

Priority criterion	Rating 1-3
Effect on equality and opportunity and good relations	
Social need	
Effect on people's daily lives	
Relevance to a public authority's functions	

Note: The Total Rating Score should be used to prioritise the policy in rank order with other policies screened in for equality impact assessment. This list of priorities will assist the public authority in timetabling. Details of the Public Authority's Equality Impact Assessment Timetable should be included in the quarterly Screening Report.

Is the policy affected by timetables established by other relevant public authorities?

If yes, please provide details

Part 4

4.1 Monitoring

The College should consider the guidance contained in the Commission's Monitoring Guidance for Use by Public Authorities (July 2007).

The Commission recommends that where the policy has been amended or an alternative policy introduced, the public authority should monitor more broadly than for adverse impact (See Benefits, P.9-10, paras 2.13 – 2.20 of the Monitoring Guidance).

Effective monitoring will help the college identify any future adverse impact arising from the policy which may lead the college to conduct an equality impact assessment, as well as help with future planning and policy development.

As part of the monitoring qualitative and quantitative data may be used.

Please state monitoring proposals:

What will be monitored?	What is the timescale?	Who will monitor the impact?
Policy activity in relation to report	Annually	Chief Human Resources Officer

Reporting on monitoring (insert college arrangements)