Policy 008: Equality and Diversity

1.   Purpose and Scope

1.1. This policy describes the way in which ACM approaches matters relating to student and staff equality and diversity.

1.2. This policy outlines the steps taken to ensure due consideration is taken to the embedding of a culture at ACM which is sensitive, inclusive and mindful of its stakeholders differing needs and expectations in relation to equality and diversity.

2.   Policy Statement

Equality and Diversity

2.1. The Academy of Contemporary Music (ACM) aims to ensure that no one is treated less favourably than another on the grounds of gender, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religious or political beliefs, disability, marital status, social background, family circumstance, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, spent criminal convictions, age or for any other unlawful reason.

2.2 ACM recognises and encourages the valuable and enriching contribution of all who work within ACM and the rights of all individuals who come into contact with ACM, such as prospective students and other stakeholders.

2.3 This policy provides ACM's overarching vision, values and commitments in relation to equality and diversity. It has been written to reflect changes in equality legislation including the Equality Act 2010.

2.4 At ACM we are committed to advancing equality of opportunity, respecting and celebrating differences, eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation and fostering good relations between all who work or learn at ACM, or use our services. We recognise that all have a right to equality of opportunity regardless of the nine characteristics covered by the Act:

- Race
- Disability
- Gender
- Age
- Sexual Orientation
- Religion and belief
- Gender Reassignment
- Pregnancy/maternity
- Marriage/civil partnership

2.5 Other aspects of a person's identity, background or circumstances can cause them to experience discrimination, for example a person's socio economic status, class or background. ACM is committed to advancing equality and eliminating discrimination on these and other grounds.

The Student Experience

2.6 ACM is committed to:

(a) Ensuring and promoting equality through teaching and learning, and also in the selection, enrolment, assessment and progression of students.
(b)   Providing appropriate student support and guidance which reflects the diversity of students' needs both pre-entry and on-course. This means that no student will receive less favourable treatment on the basis of their protected characteristics.
(c) Support and guidance for students will be linked to their particular needs. It also means that ACM aims to promote equal respect for all people, to challenge prejudice and to prepare students to work in a multicultural and diverse society.

Principles

2.7 This Policy is underpinned by principles to which all ACM students and stakeholders should adhere, namely:

(a) To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our staff and students are recognized and valued.
(b) That successful implementation of the Policy is the responsibility of all ACM students and stakeholders.
(c) That all students and other stakeholders of ACM will be treated with fairness, respect and sensitivity.
(d) To aim to create and maintain a working and learning environment where all stakeholders will have the opportunity to fully participate in order to achieve their full potential in a climate free from discrimination, bullying or harassment.

2.8 Breaches of this Policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

2.9 The Equality Act recognises the following types of discrimination:

(a) Direct discrimination, including associative and perception of discrimination.
(b) Indirect discrimination
(c) Harassment
(d) Victimization
(e) Discrimination arising from disability
(f) Failure to make reasonable adjustments

2.10 This policy applies to all students and visitors to ACM. Where students are working at premises other than ACM locations, they will be subject to the policy.

2.11 This policy covers all behavior by the individual including online platforms such as the Virtual Learning Environment, email, communications channels, distribution media and platforms and across any social media.

Implementation

2.12 The Equality Act 2010 introduced a Public Sector Equality Duty, in force from April 2010, which requires ACM to give due regard to:

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(a) Eliminating discrimination, harassment or victimisation.
(b) Advancing equality of opportunity.
(c) Fostering good relations.

2.13 Implementation of this policy is managed via ACM, School and Department plans which will take account of ACM's commitment to Equality and Diversity and seek to implement its provisions.

2.14 ACM will ensure that its strategic plan has a commitment to equality and diversity; that they receive and review reports on student equality, diversity and widening participation, that they agree relevant equality targets and impact measures and monitor progress towards these.

2.15 The Senior Management Team will take an active and visible lead in driving forward equality and diversity; provide reports; oversee implementation of this policy; ensure equality and diversity data is embedded within self-assessment reports and development plans and agree quality targets with managers.

Monitoring

2.16 The effectiveness of this policy in ensuring we are meeting our obligations will be monitored through regular collection and analysis of data that should be as unobtrusive to individuals as possible, commensurate with this objective.

2.17 ACM monitoring of the implementation and effectiveness of the Policy will be the responsibility of the Senior Management Team. Departments will be responsible for the gathering and analysis of data as required in line with cyclical reporting. Outcomes from analysis of information collated will inform self assessment processes and ACM improvement plans.

Addressing Discrimination, Harassment and Victimisation

2.18 ACM will:

(a) Actively challenge and tackle all forms of prejudice, discrimination and stereotypical attitudes.
(b) Deal with allegations of discrimination, harassment and victimization sensitively, and investigate promptly, fairly and thoroughly.
(c) Treat any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation carried out by an individual as a matter for possible disciplinary action. This includes harassment by a third party.

Publicity

2.19 The Image ACM projects of itself in its promotional material, advertising and public relations activity, sends messages about the people ACM expects and wishes to serve. ACM's publicity will be regularly reviewed to ensure that:

(a) It is non-discriminatory to any group or individual
(b) It is provided in hard copy and electronic forms to ensure that information is widely available and accessible by individuals with a range of needs.
(c) It gives the positive image of a place which welcomes everyone for education

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and training.

(d) Applications from members of disadvantaged or underrepresented groups are actively encouraged into areas where such groups might be underrepresented.

2.20 Every effort will be made to ensure that appropriate publicity reaches all groups in the community, enabling the widest possible recruitment.

2.21 All ACM students, and potential students, should be made aware of:

(a) The available study support.
(b) The services available within ACM to support students with additional learning needs.
(c) ACM counselling and guidance services.
(d) The availability of careers guidance and industry related opportunities and enrichment activities.

Student Recruitment

2.22 The process of gaining admission to ACM programmes will be clearly expressed and structured to allow, wherever possible, ease of access to all students throughout the year where appropriate. Prospective students will be offered support and guidance at all stages.

2.23 During the admissions process, students will be invited to indicate details relating to their ethnic origin, any additional learning needs and any special educational needs. This information will be used only for the purposes of providing support, for monitoring and as a reference when considering necessary modifications to the curriculum, marketing activities, buildings and equipment.

2.24 No ACM employee will discriminate unfairly, directly or indirectly in the guidance and recruitment of students.

2.25 Students with additional learning needs and special educational needs will be given the opportunity to discuss ways of overcoming any problems of access (in it's widest sense, including access to the curriculum) and should be actively involved in problem solving.

Access to the Curriculum

2.26 ACM is an open access institution that seeks to offer learning opportunities to all, whatever their previous level of achievement.

2.27 Programme Handbooks, syllabi and resources will be regularly examined to ensure they do not discriminate, directly or indirectly, against any student group. They should be enhanced by including positive acknowledgement of the contributions made to society by a diversity of cultures.

2.28 Programmes should be accessible to as wide a range of students as possible, by enhanced flexibility in both delivery and timing.

2.29 Learning Support will be made available to all students requiring it, subject to resources.

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2.30 Ways of modifying curriculum delivery to allow access to classes to individuals with additional learning needs or special educational needs should continue to be sought.

2.31 Assistive technologies will be developed and deployed to assist and enhance the participation of students with disabilities and impairments in their use of learning opportunities.

2.32 Learning opportunities will be provided for targeted groups to facilitate access and opportunity.

2.33 Procedures for accreditation and assessment will, wherever practicable, be flexible and responsive to the needs of the whole range of students who attend ACM.

2.34 ACM supports the entitlement, for the whole ACM community, to information, guidance and counselling, which will enable individuals to manage their personal development.

Equality and Diversity related concerns

2.35 Any student, customer or client who feels she/he is being discriminated against for reason of disability, gender, ethnic origin, age, socio-economic group or sexual orientation should raise the matter formally or informally, as appropriate, with one of the following, in the first instance:

- Their Pathway Leader
- Head of Education
- Head of Teaching and Learning
- Head of Student Services
- Academic Registrar

2.36 The Student Complaints and Grievance Procedure is available for cases of alleged discrimination against students.

2.37 All complaints will be taken seriously by the person receiving them and the appropriate process will be followed to respond to the complaint. Complaints provisions are subject to regular review under the Quality Assurance and Enhancement policy and procedures.

ACM Environment

2.38 By adapting and modifying the environment and facilities, where appropriate, ACM will strive to make students, staff, customers and visitors feel welcome.

2.39 Offensive material of a discriminatory nature will not be displayed in any part of ACM.

2.40 ACM communications and publication (internal and external) will not use language or images which are potentially discriminatory against any group or individual.

2.41 A facility will be made available, if required, to meet diverse religious needs.

2.42 ACM catering facilities will reflect the needs of and show sensitivity to different dietary needs.

2.43 ACM will comply with the requirements of all current legislation relating to the access

rights of people with disabilities.

2.44 Consideration will continue to be given to the provision of off-site tuition, where appropriate, to the needs of disadvantaged groups.

3.   Responsible Parties
3.1 The policy lead is responsible for the cyclical monitoring and review of the policy in liaison with the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Manager. The Equality and Diversity Policy lead is:
- Head of Student Services

3.2 Decisions and appropriate actions in support of the implementation of the Policy will be authorised by the following designated staff:

- Head of Student Services
- Human Resources Manager
- Senior Management Team
- Education Management Team
- Pathway Leaders
- Staff with line management responsibilities

4. Reference Points
4.1 Internal:
- Safeguarding Policy
- Student Complaints and Grievances Policy
- Student Disciplinary Policy
- Staff Disciplinary Policy
- Content Approval Policy
- Data Protection Policy

4.2 External:
- The Equality Act 2010

5. Date of Approval and Next Review

Version: 1.1

Approved on: 28 Jul 2017

Approved by: Academic Board

Next Review: 01 Aug 2019