



Arts & Humanities
Research Council

AHRC Equality Scheme & Action Plan

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This equality scheme is available in different formats. Please contact AHRC Human Resources department to request this.

1. Introduction

AHRC is committed to the promotion of equal opportunities and is proud to publish its first single Equality Scheme.

The Equality Scheme responds to our statutory duties to promote equality in three areas - race, disability and gender. The duties are covered by the following legislation:

- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- Equality Act 2006

These positive duties require AHRC to demonstrate our commitment to the promotion of equality and the elimination of discrimination. AHRC has developed a single Equality Scheme which brings together its response to all three duties covering disability, race and gender.

This equality scheme sets out our approach to equality and diversity both as an employer, and as a funding body. The scheme includes an equality action plan which is intended to build on existing good practice by setting out the practical steps to be taken to address these issues.

The scheme is designed to cover a three year period, and the equality action plan will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis. We recognise that there is always room for improvement and welcome comments and feedback on this document.

1.1 Involvement and Consultation in developing this scheme

In developing this equality scheme the AHRC has involved and consulted with its staff and stakeholders. Some staff feedback on equality issues was provided in the annual staff survey (issued in August 2006) and this was considered. All staff were emailed to ask if they would like to volunteer to help develop the scheme, and it was mentioned that we particularly wanted involvement from those with a disability. A mixture of staff both with and without disabilities volunteered to be involved in the scheme. These staff were interviewed about their experiences of working at AHRC and the issues that were important to them. This feedback was used when developing the action plan. These volunteers were also asked to comment on a draft version of the scheme.

The views of stakeholders were sought through a questionnaire which covered disability, gender and ethnicity. This questionnaire was available for anyone to complete on the AHRC website, and a number of AHRC stakeholders were contacted directly to request them to complete the questionnaire. Over 400 responses to this questionnaire were received, and the feedback was then used to inform the equality action plan.

A draft of this scheme was sent to the AHRC's recognised Trade Union – the Public and Commercial Services Trade Union, who have also provided feedback on this.

Further feedback and comments on this scheme are welcome. Please send these to the Human Resources department of AHRC.

2. Overview of AHRC

2.1 Background

The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) is an independent non-departmental public body of the Office of Science and Innovation, and operates on a UK-wide basis.

AHRC supports research within a wide subject domain from traditional humanities subjects, such as history, modern languages and English literature to the creative and performing arts.

AHRC was established in April 2005, and evolved from the Arts and Humanities Research Board, which was founded in 1998. The decision to create AHRC underlines the importance of high-quality research in the arts and humanities for the cultural, creative and economic life of the nation.

AHRC has an annual budget of more than £75 million which it uses to fund a range of UK-wide programmes supporting the highest quality research and postgraduate training in the arts and humanities, as well as a range of knowledge transfer activities.

We receive around 1500 applications to our seven Research schemes, from which we make around 550-600 awards. From around 6000 applications to our Postgraduate schemes we make around 1500 awards. These awards are made to individual academic researchers or postgraduate students through a rigorous process of peer review.

AHRC is one of 7 Research Councils within the UK. The other Councils are:

BBSRC- Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council
STFC – Science and Technology Facilities Council
EPSRC – Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council
ESRC – Economic and Social Research Council
MRC – Medical Research Council
NERC – Natural Environment Research Council

The AHRC employs just over 100 staff in its offices in Bristol.

2.2 Strategy

AHRC's vision is to be a recognised world leader in advancing arts and humanities research.

AHRC's strategic aims are as follows:

- to promote and support the production of world-class research in the Arts and Humanities
 - to promote and support world-class postgraduate training designed to equip graduates for research and other professional careers
 - to promote and enhance the impact of arts and humanities research by encouraging researchers to disseminate and transfer knowledge to other contexts where it can make a difference
 - to sustain and raise the profile of Arts and Humanities research in the UK and abroad and to be an effective advocate for its significance in social, cultural and economic life.
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3. Equality Duties

The Equality Scheme responds to our statutory duties to promote equality in three areas - race, disability and gender. The duties are covered by the following legislation:

- Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Equality Act 2006

3.1 Disability Discrimination Act 2005

The Disability Equality Duty (DED) is part of the Disability Discrimination Act (2005) and came into effect on 4 December 2006.

This included a general duty which applies to all public authorities, plus additional specific duties to support the majority of public authorities in achieving the outcomes required by the general duty. AHRC is required to comply with both the general and specific duties.

The Disability General Duty requires public authorities to have due regard to the need to:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Disability Discrimination Act
- eliminate harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life
- take steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

AHRC is also covered by specific duties, which set out a framework to assist organisations in meeting their general duty. The specific duties require AHRC to:

- publish a Disability Equality Scheme (including within it an Action Plan)
- involve disabled people in producing the Scheme and Action Plan
- demonstrate they have taken actions in the Scheme and achieved appropriate outcomes
- report on progress
- review and revise the Scheme.

3.2 Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000

AHRC must comply with the General Duty of the Race Relations Act 1976 as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. This duty states that the AHRC must have due regard to the need:

- a) to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination,
- b) to promote equality of opportunity and
- c) to promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

The general duty requires the AHRC to:

- identify our functions and policies, and proposed policies, that are relevant to the duty (that are likely to have most effect on people and other functions)
 - prioritise our functions and policies based on their relevance to the general duty
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- assess whether and the extent to which our functions and policies may be relevant to the general duty requirement
- set out our plan of action outlining the changes that we will make to ensure the functions and policies meet the three parts of the duty

AHRC must also comply with the Employment Monitoring Duties by 2nd March 2007. This requires the AHRC to monitor, by reference to the racial groups to which they belong –

- a) the numbers of–
 - staff in post; and
 - applicants for employment, training and promotion, from each such group; and
- b) where there are 150 or more full-time staff, the numbers of staff from each such group who–
 - receive training
 - benefit or suffer detriment as a result of its performance assessment procedures
 - are involved in grievance procedures
 - are the subject of disciplinary procedures
 - cease employment with that person or other body.
 (AHRC does not currently have 150 full time staff)

Results of monitoring are to be published annually.

The AHRC is not legally required to comply with the specific duty of publishing a race equality scheme. AHRC sees the inclusion of race and ethnic origin in this equality scheme as good practice and as a way to outline arrangements for ensuring our functions and policies meet the general and employment duties.

3.3 Equality Act 2006

The Equality Act 2006 introduced a duty for gender equality to take effect from April 2007.

The Gender General Duty requires all public authorities, when carrying out their functions, to give due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment
- and promote equality of opportunity between women and men.

AHRC is also covered by specific duties, designed to support progress in delivering the general duty. The specific duties are:

- To prepare and publish a gender equality scheme showing how it will meet its general and specific duties and setting out its gender equality objectives.
 - In formulating its overall objectives, to consider the need to include objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gap.
 - To gather and use information on how the public authority's policies and practices affect gender equality in the workplace and in the delivery of services.
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- To consult stakeholders (i.e. employees, service users and others, including trade unions) and take account of relevant information in order to determine its gender equality objectives.
- To assess the impact of its current and proposed policies and practices on gender equality.
- To implement the actions set out in its scheme within three years, unless it is unreasonable or impractical to do so.
- To report against the scheme every year, and review the scheme at least every three years.

4. AHRC Approach – as an employer

4.1 Equal Opportunities Policy

The AHRC Equal Opportunities policy outlines AHRC's commitment and approach to equal opportunities. This policy is reviewed formally on a bi-annual basis, and is also amended as relevant legislation comes into effect. Changes to this are agreed with the HR Committee and the PCS Trade Union through the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC). This policy is attached in appendix A.

4.2 Equal Opportunities Statement

AHRC has signed up to a cross Research Council statement on equality and diversity which is as follows:

The Research Councils aim to develop as organisations that value the diversity of their staff and stakeholders, enabling all to realise their full potential by valuing the contribution of everyone, and recognising and harnessing the benefits that differences can bring.

The UK Research Councils are committed to eliminating unlawful discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity and good relations across and between the defined equalities groups in all of their relevant functions.

Accordingly, no eligible job applicant, funding applicant, employee or external stakeholder including members of the public should receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of: gender, marital status, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, race, colour, nationality, ethnicity or national origins, religion or similar philosophical belief, spent criminal conviction, age or disability.

This statement is included in the AHRC Equal Opportunities policy.

4.3 Monitoring

AHRC currently monitors applicants for jobs at AHRC on the basis of gender, ethnic origin, disability, and age. This data is also collected for existing members of staff, and data is presented on a regular basis to the HR Committee. The data is reviewed and any issues identified are investigated further, and action taken where necessary.

Data relating to staff and applicants is submitted for joint Research Council benchmarking on an annual basis.

4.4 Positive about disabled people – two ticks symbol

AHRC has been awarded accreditation under the positive about disabled people (two ticks symbol). This award is given by the Employment Service to employers who show a commitment to good practice in employing disabled people. This gives a clear and positive sign about the AHRC's commitment to the employment and development of disabled people.

There are 5 commitments that the AHRC agrees to follow under this symbol:

- to interview all disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for a job vacancy and consider them on their abilities
- to ensure there is a mechanism in place to discuss, at any time, but at least once a year, with disabled employees what can be done to make sure they can develop and use their abilities
- to make every effort when employees become disabled to make sure they stay in employment
- to take action to ensure that all employees develop the appropriate level of disability awareness needed to make these commitments work
- each year, to review the five commitments and what had been achieved, plan ways to improve on them and let employees and Jobcentre Plus know about progress and future plans.

AHRC displays the two ticks symbol on all its job adverts to attract disabled people.

4.5 Reasonable Adjustments

AHRC is committed to making reasonable adjustments to help disabled people overcome any practical difficulties that they may face during recruitment or in their work. For example, adjusting premises, altering working hours, providing training or a reader or an interpreter, acquiring or modifying equipment, modifying procedures for testing or assessment or allowing absence during working hours for rehabilitation.

An Occupational Health service is available to staff, as well as specialist assessments on particular conditions, to provide advice on suitable adjustments or equipment.

4.6 Facilities

The needs of disabled people are considered when planning changes to the office environment and facilities. Alterations that have recently been made include a cut-away part of the reception desk to allow wheelchair access as well as placing light switches at a height appropriate for a wheelchair user.

4.7 Change Programme

The Change Programme was established in June 2006 to help AHRC manage the number and scale of interlocking changes likely to take place over the next three years. The trigger for most changes is likely to be the establishment of a Shared Services Centre (SSC) with other Research Councils, and there are a number of internal projects in addition which will also affect our activities. A Change Programme Board has been set up and membership comes from across the AHRC, to reflect the breadth of the issues.

An essential part of the Change Programme is communication, to ensure awareness and engagement of stakeholders, and particularly staff, as their engagement is essential to the continued operation of the AHRC and its transformation during the period of the Change Programme. The Change Programme considers equality issues when determining the most appropriate methods of communication to ensure that communication is effective for all members of staff.

A People Enabling Group (PEG) has been set up to deal with people issues in the project to set up the SSC. This includes ensuring a consistent and transparent approach across all the Research Councils to staff whose jobs are affected. The group consists of representatives from all Research Council and the Head of HR at AHRC attends this group. PEG will consider activities such as transfers of staff into the SSC, redeployment, redundancy, competencies, learning and development. PEG will also consider organisational design of the shared services centre, particularly the HR function. PEG will ensure that equal opportunities considerations are taken into account throughout this project to ensure a fair and best practice approach.

5. AHRC Approach: As a funding body

5.1 Procurement

The AHRC procurement guidance contains the Research Council equal opportunities statement and refers to our duty to promote race equality.

The procurement guidance states that everyone in the AHRC is responsible for working towards achieving equal opportunities in procurement. The AHRC needs to strive for:

- All contracts to be delivered in a way which is non-discriminatory, and promotes equality of opportunity for AHRC staff, the general public and business.
- The goods, works, and services provided by contractors to cater for all users' needs.
- Contractors to be representative of the local population with respect to ethnic diversity.
- Contractors to work on a voluntary basis to promote equality of opportunity beyond the scope of the contract.

5.2 Decision making and advisory bodies

Members of the AHRC's decision-making and advisory bodies receive a Code of Practice which includes the AHRC's equal opportunity and diversity policy. Members are required to abide by this code.

5.3 Appointments to decision-making bodies

AHRC makes appointments to its decision-making bodies in line with guidance from the Officer of the Commission for Public Appointments. Targets for gender, ethnicity and geographical distribution are set and AHRC advertises to attract candidates from underrepresented areas. Role models are also identified and will be promoted. Council appointments are Ministerial appointments made and monitored by the DTI. For other appointments AHRC captures equal opportunities monitoring information which is

reviewed by a Nominations Committee specifically tasked with ensuring balanced membership. The Nominating Committee received briefing guidance on matters of equality and diversity.

Council appointments are OSI led and in accordance with OCPA guidelines. We are usually close to meeting our targets, and women and ethnic minorities are better represented than in the wider academic population.

5.4 Postgraduate applicants and award holders

The Postgraduate Guide for Applicants contains an equal opportunities statement covering ethnicity, gender and disability. Panel members are also alerted to AHRC's equal opportunities policy through the Panel Members' Handbook and information days.

The application form for postgraduate funding includes an equal opportunities form which covers age, gender, disability and ethnic origin and applicants are encouraged to complete this form. The information is recorded on the AHEAD database and used for monitoring purposes. A report on this data is presented to the Postgraduate Committee and data is also published on AHRC's website.

A Disability Support Allowance (DSA) is available to students with a long-term disability who, as a result of their disability, are obliged to incur additional expenditure in connection with their studies. AHRC is currently working with the other Councils to harmonise on our processes in this area.

Postgraduate funding allows for a paid six-month period of maternity leave for award holders whose expected date of childbirth occurs during the period of the award. The award is extended by the period of leave. Award holders can take up to two weeks paternity leave, though this is treated as leave of absence so the award is not extended.

Applicants are also allowed to go on suspension for up to a year if, for example, they are unwell.

As of October 2007, the policy regarding support for part-time students is changing. They will get a maintenance grant rather than the current £275 per year in support of their studies.

In terms of postgraduate applicants, a large print summary version of the Guide for Applicants and the application forms is provided on the website. This has been produced according to guidance from the RNIB.

5.5 Research programmes applicants and award holders

The Research Panel Members' and Peer Review College Handbook and the Research funding guide all contain an equal opportunities statement which states AHRC's commitment to equal opportunities in its processes.

Research Councils have common terms and conditions for research grants. This contains details about terms of employment, maternity/paternity, and sick leave. AHRC offers flexible solutions to deal with periods of maternity and paternity leave and sickness absence within the period of an award, which are agreed on a case-by-case basis.

Applicants outline all costs associated with their research at the point of application, so any additional requirements such as equipment can be included on the application.

Equal Opportunities monitoring takes place through the Joint Electronic Submission (JES) application process, where ethnic origin, disability and gender are all recorded for applicants for an AHRC award.

5.6 Knowledge Transfer applicants and award holders

Awards for Knowledge Transfer follow the procedures of the Research department wherever possible, for consistency and efficiency. Equal Opportunities monitoring data is collected for applicants for this funding via the JES application process.

Research Councils have common terms and conditions for research grants. This contains details about terms of employment, maternity/paternity, and sick leave.

5.7 Website accessibility

AHRC's website is accessible according to current Government recommendation. It fulfils all Priority One checkpoints from the Web Accessibility Initiative and so is in conformance Level 'A'.

In addition, the site is just a few steps away from the full level of accessibility and over the past years adjustments have been made to make the website more accessible and large print versions of the PG competition have been produced.

Accessibility is large part of AHRC's current web developments.

Accessibility Measurement

The WWC Web Content Accessibility Guide (WCAG) is a basis for most accessibility evaluation. Guidelines are ranked according to decreasing importance for accessibility:

- **Priority 1**
A Web content developer **must** satisfy this checkpoint. Otherwise, one or more groups will find it impossible to access information in the document. Satisfying this checkpoint is a basic requirement for some groups to be able to use Web documents.
- **Priority 2**
A Web content developer **should** satisfy this checkpoint. Otherwise, one or more groups will find it difficult to access information in the document. Satisfying this checkpoint will remove significant barriers to accessing Web documents.
- **Priority 3**
A Web content developer **may** address this checkpoint. Otherwise, one or more groups will find it somewhat difficult to access information in the document. Satisfying this checkpoint will improve access to Web documents.

There are 3 levels of conformance:

- **Conformance Level "A"**: all Priority 1 checkpoints are satisfied;
 - **Conformance Level "Double-A"**: all Priority 1 and 2 checkpoints are satisfied;
 - **Conformance Level "Triple-A"**: all Priority 1, 2, and 3 checkpoints are satisfied;
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The Joint Research Council Web Group are currently working on an accessibility statement for Council websites and earlier this year agreed to achieve a minimum rating of A for their websites, and where possible, a rating of AA.

Automated software can be used to assess a website. (The best known is from Watchfire.). However, this software does not give the full picture so it is good practice to have human intervention.

The "Dive Into" resource provides a practical checklist of 30 items to improve a website. It helpfully links its guidance to specific problems which people with disabilities encounter rather than being a set of rules.

Some work was done on the AHRB website a couple of years ago with the Watchfire software, the WAI guidelines and with 'Dive Into'. Any issues which were not fixed were due to technical or practical limitations of the current publishing system.

The current website now has just one Priority 2 failure and two Priority 3 failures.

Outstanding issues with www.ahrc.ac.uk are:

- Priority 2 failure: "Make sure event handlers do not require use of a mouse." (One instance)
 - Priority 3 failure: Include default, place-holding characters in edit boxes and text areas. (search box)
 - Priority 3 failure: Separate adjacent links with more than whitespace.
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6. Equality Action Plan

Functions which have the greatest relevance to ethnic origin, disability and gender equality duties are those relating to the following:

As an employer:

- Human Resources policies and procedures relating to AHRC staff
- Human Resources policies and procedures relating to applicants for jobs at AHRC
- Facilities
- Change Programme

As a funding body:

- Procurement
- Research Award Holders and Applicants
- Postgraduate Award Holders and Applicants
- Knowledge Transfer Award Holders and Applicants
- Panel Members
- Council members
- Peer Review members
- AHRC website

6.1 Action Plan: as an employer

Description of activity	Relevant equality duty	Action required	Responsibility	Timescales
Equality Monitoring	Disability Race Gender	a) To continue to monitor the ethnic origin, gender and disability of all members of staff, as well as all applicants for jobs at AHRC (by the Joint Recruitment Unit). To continue to report on the ethnic origin, gender mix, and number of disabled staff and applicants to the HR Committee on a six monthly basis, discussing results and identifying actions.	Human Resources	Ongoing
		b) Further ethnic origin monitoring is to be carried out for:	Human	Further

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - internal recruitment - promotions - training and development - performance management outcomes - leavers - discipline and grievance <p>Data to be reported to HR Committee to identify any issues that need to be addressed, and necessary action taken as a result.</p> <p>Results will be published annually (although individual confidentiality will be maintained.)</p>	Resources	monitoring to be in place by March 2007
Equal Opportunities Policy	Disability Gender Race	Policy to be formally reviewed on a bi-annual basis, and updated as law changes. Changes are to be agreed with HR Committee and PCS Trade Union through the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC).	Human Resources	Next review due: May 2008
Publish single Equality Scheme	Disability Race Gender	AHRC equality scheme to be published on Sharepoint and external website.	Human Resources, with input from all divisions	By 30 th April 2007
Cross Research Council Equality Benchmarking	Disability Race Gender	Continue to participate in the annual cross Research Council benchmarking exercise, submitting data relating to disability, ethnic origin and gender for existing staff and applicants, and presenting results to the HR Committee and JNC so that data can be discussed and issues identified.	Human Resources	Annual exercise- next due July 2007
Impact Assessment of Policies (see appendix B)	Disability Race Gender	Select representatives to carry out the impact assessment of policies. Policies assessed as having the highest relevance to disability, ethnic origin or gender are to be subjected to a full impact assessment.	Human Resources	Timetable for assessing policies to be set by June 2007
Equal Pay Audit	Gender	a) Continue to carry out a gender equal pay audit of staff salaries on an annual basis, sharing results with the HR Committee and the JNC.	Human Resources	January 2007 (and then annually)

	Disability Race	b) Extend the Equal Pay Audit to cover ethnic origin and disability as well as gender, and to carry out on an annual basis	Human Resources	March 2007 (and then annually in January)
Research Council Equality and Diversity Advisory Group	Disability Gender Race	AHRC is a member of the Research Councils Equality and Diversity Advisory Group (RCEDAG) and a representative from the AHRC Human Resources team is to continue attending these meetings to ensure consistency of approach and sharing of best practice across Research Councils.	Human Resources	Ongoing
Equal Opportunities Statement	Disability Gender Race	An agreed cross Research Council statement on equal opportunities is currently incorporated into the AHRC equal opportunities policy and equality statement. This statement should be used more widely in other AHRC policy documents and guidance to ensure consistency.	All divisions to consider using statement.	September 2007
Diversity training	Disability Gender Race	<p>Diversity awareness sessions were held for all staff in 2004, and for new starters during 2005.</p> <p>To run a new programme of diversity training starting with a session for the Senior Management Group at AHRC, to be held by Employment Law Solicitors in February 2007.</p> <p>To source a provider to run the RCEDAG joint diversity training programme for all staff, and monitor the effectiveness of the training sessions.</p> <p>Put in place a schedule of on-going equality training for all staff.</p> <p>Ensure that other training provided by AHRC, such as Performance Management and Recruitment and Selection training incorporates up-to-date equal opportunities information and line managers responsibilities.</p>	Human Resources	<p>SMG training to be held in February 2007.</p> <p>All staff training to be held by the end of 2007.</p>
Disability awareness training	Disability	Consider offering disability awareness training to colleagues of disabled members of staff, if applicable.	Human Resources	As need arises.

Recruitment advertising	Disability Gender Race	Continue to monitor data from the Bristol Evening Post (where the majority of vacancies are advertised) to ensure that the readership profile matches that of the local community, and present findings to HR Committee.	Human Resources	September 2007
Staff Survey feedback	Disability Gender Race	To continue to ask questions on equality as part of the annual staff survey, including whether staff have even been subjected to unacceptable behaviours, and whether they believe senior managers are committed to equal opportunities. Results to be monitored and action taken if the situation worsens. Include further questions that relate directly to the race, gender and disability duties.	Human Resources	Next survey due September 2007
Positive about disabled people	Disability	Continue to display the two ticks symbol on recruitment advertising and follow these commitments in practice. Review the commitments on a yearly basis and take action where necessary.	Human Resources	Review: May 2007
Discussion with new starters	Disability	If a new member of staff has indicated that they have a disability, a member of the HR team should discuss with them what needs they have and any necessary adjustments before they start work at AHRC.	Human Resources	Ongoing
Promote AHRC as accessible to disabled people	Disability	Consider ways to promote AHRC as an accessible organisation. Discuss the options with local disability groups.	Human Resources	October 2007
HR Procedures	Disability	Allowing flexibility in internal procedures so that processes can be completed in a different way if necessary e.g. reducing the amount of form-filling for performance management, training requests if required.	Human Resources	As required.
Work experience	Disability	Contact organisations that arrange work experience for people with disabilities to offer work experience placements to candidates.	Human Resources	October 2007
Staff meetings	Disability	Ensure that written updates are available after all staff meetings.	Person responsible for staff meeting	Ongoing
Promoting	Disability	Promoting awareness of policies and procedures in place, and where staff	Human	August 2007

awareness	Gender Race	can get support or advice if required, in relation to equality issues.	Resources	
Accessibility of offices and meeting rooms	Disability	Continue to consider the needs of people with disabilities in the design of AHRC offices, meeting rooms and facilities.	Facilities Manager	Ongoing
Accessibility of offices and meeting rooms	Disability	The main AHRC meeting rooms to have a new speaker system implemented as well as large display screens to aid those with sight or hearing impairments.	Facilities Manager	May 2007
Change Programme	Disability Gender Race	Recommend that the planned staff survey on the SSC Project contains questions that relate to equalities in order to ensure that there are no issues here and staff can provide feedback on any concerns they have.	Change Manager	April 2007
Change Programme	Disability Gender Race	Contribute to operation of SSC Implementation Project People Enabling Group to ensure staff practices during the Project and design of the SSC meet equality requirements.	Head of HR	Sept 2007

6.2 Action Plan: as a funding body:

Description of activity	Relevant equality duty	Action required	Responsibility	Timescales
Postgraduate division	Disability Gender	Continue to offer flexibility in awards, for example maternity leave, disabled student allowances, and suspension of awards.	Senior Programme Manager, PG	Ongoing
Postgraduate division	Gender	Implement changes to support provided to part-time award holders and review at a later date	Senior Programme Manager, PG	Implement changes in October 2007 and then set timetable for review
Postgraduate and Research divisions	Disability Race Gender	AHRC is a member of the Research Councils' Research Careers and Diversity Unit and a representative from AHRC is to continue attending these meetings to ensure consistency of approach and sharing of best	Senior Programme Manager, PG	Ongoing

		practice across Research Councils.		
Postgraduate division	Disability Race Gender	Continue equal opportunities monitoring of applications for funding and reporting at PG Committee, discussing results and identifying actions.	Senior Programme Manager, PG	Ongoing
Procurement	Disability Race Gender	Update the procurement guidance to ensure that this covers relevant legislation and ensure that AHRC procurement officers are aware of changes.	Finance Manager	December 2007
Research division	Gender Disability	Continue to offer flexibility in awards, for example maternity leave, paternity and in cases of illness.	Research division	Ongoing
Guidance/ training for those involved in decisions	Disability Race Gender	Ensure all those involved in decision making – e.g. panel members, Council members, peer review college are aware of their responsibilities under Equal Opportunities Duties.	Programmes	Ongoing
Website accessibility	Disability	Two AHRC Software Developers, and the Web and Communications Officer to attend training course on 'Web Accessibility for Developers and Designers'. This course will provide training on how to design accessible web pages and how to evaluate web pages for accessibility, and includes details of the "Guide to good practice in commissioning accessible websites", developed by the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) in collaboration with the British Standards Institution (BSI).	Software Developers and Web and Communications Officer	April 2007
Website accessibility	Disability	Communications team to publish a website accessibility statement.	Communications	May 2007
Website accessibility	Disability	Improve the accessibility of the website with functional tests, and making code amends which can be easily incorporated into the current publishing method. Once complete, publish a new accessibility statement.	Communications	September 2007
Website accessibility	Disability	Implement any larger website changes as part of the Web Development Project, which will include a new publishing method and web design. Use of the DRC 'PAS 78: a guide to good practice in commissioning accessible websites' during this project.	Communications	Ongoing
Impact assessment of policies and	Disability Race Gender	Identify the policies and procedures that have most relevance to the race, gender and disability duties, and develop a timetable for completing a full impact assessment on these policies and procedures.	All	Timetable to be agreed September

procedures (see appendix B)				2007.
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6.3 Review of scheme and plan

It is intended that this scheme will remain in place for three years, at which time it will have a full review and revision. The action plan will be reviewed on a 6 monthly basis to ensure that required actions are completed, and to add new actions to the plan as they arise. A report on the implementation of key aspects of the scheme will be published annually.

6.4 Contact and Information

All enquiries concerning this document should be addressed to the Human Resources Department of AHRC.

This document is available in other formats, please contact the Human Resources department to request this.

Appendix A AHRC Equal Opportunities Policy

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to communicate the commitment of the Chair, Chief Executive, members of Council and the senior management team to the promotion of equality of opportunity and diversity in the AHRC, as well as explaining the AHRC's approach to equality of opportunity and diversity. The policy is supported by the Chair, Chief Executive, members of Council and senior management team.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all employees, and other workers at AHRC, for example agency workers or contractors. The policy is not contractual, but is intended as a statement of current AHRC policy. The AHRC reserves the right to amend the policy as necessary to meet any change in requirements.
- 2.2 Staff should follow this policy in all their dealings with other colleagues, actual or potential applicants, academics, the general public and other stakeholders. Any act of discrimination by employees or failure to comply with the terms of this policy will result in disciplinary action.
- 2.3 As stated in their Code of Practice, this policy also applies to AHRC Council, Committee, Panel and Peer Review members.
- 2.4 Applicants for funding at AHRC and award holders should refer to the Equal Opportunities policies of the Research and Postgraduate divisions.

3. Responsibilities

- 3.1 The Head of Human Resources has responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy. Each director, associate director, head of division and programme manager also has responsibilities and the AHRC expects all staff to abide by and support the policy.

4. Policy Statement

- 4.1 The UK Research Councils aim to develop as organisations that value the diversity of their staff and stakeholders, enabling all to realise their full potential by valuing the contribution of everyone, and recognising and harnessing the benefits that differences can bring.
 - 4.2 Research Councils, including AHRC, are committed to eliminating unlawful discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity and good relations across and between the defined equalities groups in all of their relevant functions.
 - 4.3 Accordingly, no eligible job applicant, funding applicant, employee or external stakeholder including members of the public should receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of: gender, marital status, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, race, colour, nationality, ethnicity or national origins, religion or similar philosophical belief, membership/non-membership of trade union, spent criminal conviction, age or disability.
 - 4.4 AHRC is committed to equal opportunities in employment and seeks to ensure that individuals are selected and treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities.
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- 4.5 This policy applies to all aspects of employment, including recruitment, terms and conditions of work, training and development, promotion, performance management, grievance, discipline and treatment of workers when their contract of employment ends.
- 4.6 All full-time and part-time staff and job applicants (actual or potential) will be treated fairly and selection for employment, promotion, training and any other benefit will be on the basis of his or her relevant merits, aptitude and ability. All positions (except those subject to legal exemption, for example, genuine occupational qualifications) will be equally open to all members of the community. The AHRC values the contribution of all staff and hopes that the equal opportunities policy will assist staff to develop to their full potential.
- 4.7 AHRC is committed to equal opportunities for funding applicants, Council members, and Council Committees, and a separate Equal Opportunities policy/ statement applies to these people.

5. Key Principles

5.1 Commitments

5.1.1 The AHRC is committed to:

- developing a programme of action to make the equal opportunities policy fully effective;
 - enabling a culture that promotes and values diversity in the workplace;
 - taking reasonable steps to prevent any form of direct or indirect discrimination or victimisation;
 - recognising the responsibilities of staff with children and other caring responsibilities;
 - taking reasonable steps to ensure that no staff member or job applicant is placed at an unfair disadvantage by requirements that cannot be justified, and which have a disproportionate and adverse effect on people of a particular gender or gender identity, marital or family status, disability, race, ethnic origin or nationality, age, membership/non-membership of trade unions, spent criminal conviction, sexual orientation, religion or belief, or contractual and work roles of any applicant or member of staff.
 - taking steps, so far as is reasonable and practicable, to ensure that working practices and requirements enable disabled people to make a full contribution to the work of AHRC;
 - equal opportunities in the provision of opportunities for development, including provision for part-time staff and job sharers;
 - promoting a workplace where people are treated with respect and dignity and where no form of intimidation or harassment is or will be tolerated;
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- taking reasonable steps to make sure that no staff member or person connected with the work of the AHRC, including contractors and clients, experiences unlawful discrimination;
 - fulfilling all legal obligations under the relevant legislation.
- 5.1.2 AHRC seeks to ensure that part-time staff receive pro-rata the same terms and conditions as comparable full-time members of staff. Part-time and job-share staff will be encouraged to apply for development and for promotion on the same basis as full-time staff members.
- 5.1.3 Breaches of the policy will be treated as misconduct, or in the case of serious breaches, gross misconduct. Where appropriate, disciplinary action will be taken which could, in serious cases, lead to dismissal with or without notice or payment in lieu of notice. In addition individuals will be held personally liable for acts of discrimination/harassment which they commit, authorise, contribute to or condone.

5.2 Types of Discrimination

- 5.2.1 **Sex discrimination** (Sex Discrimination Act 1975) is unlawful unless the job is covered by an exemption such as a genuine occupational qualification. Areas where sex discrimination may occur include recruitment and offers of employment, terms and conditions of employment, access to or denial of opportunities including promotion and training, dismissal or subjecting someone to some other detriment.
- 5.2.2 **Equal pay** (Equal Pay Act 1970) entitles women to equal pay with men (and vice versa) if they do the same or broadly similar work, if their jobs are rated equivalent under a valid job evaluation scheme, or if their work is of equal value when compared in terms of the demands made on the worker in the job.
- 5.2.3 **Less favourable treatment on the grounds of pregnancy** is unlawful sex discrimination.
- 5.2.4 **Racial Discrimination** is unlawful unless the job is covered by an exemption such as a genuine occupational qualification.

Racial discrimination is discrimination on grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin. Areas that are covered by Race Relations Act 1976 (amended in 2000) include recruitment and offers of employment, terms and conditions of employment, access to or denial of opportunities including promotion and training, dismissal or subjecting staff or job applicants to some other detriment.

- 5.2.5 **Disability Discrimination** (Disability Discrimination Act 1995). A disability is a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities. Disability discrimination is unlawful where there is unjustified, less favourable treatment of a disabled person (including a person who has had a disability in the past) in respect of the following:

Employment (including contract workers), employment practices, recruitment and selection arrangements, premises, opportunities for promotion, transfer, training or receipt of other employee benefits or refusal of such opportunities, terms and conditions of employment, including pensions and other benefits,

accommodation, working conditions (including arrangements for staff who have become disabled or whose disability has got worse).

Employers also have a duty to consider and to make reasonable adjustments to help disabled people overcome any practical difficulties that they may face during recruitment or in their work. For example, adjusting premises, altering working hours, providing training or a reader or an interpreter, acquiring or modifying equipment, modifying procedures for testing or assessment or allowing absence during working hours for rehabilitation.

It is also unlawful when providing goods, facilities or services to the public to discriminate against disabled people in certain circumstances.

- 5.2.6 **Discrimination against part-time workers** (Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000) is unlawful when treatment of part-time workers is less favourable than that of comparable full-timers, unless the different treatment is justified on objective grounds. Less favourable treatment will include, different terms and conditions of employment (i.e not pro-rata entitlement), hourly rates and overtime rates (once the part-timer has worked more than the normal full time hours), exclusion from training because they work part-time, different entitlements to annual leave and maternity/parental leave entitlements not on a pro-rata basis.
- 5.2.7 **Discrimination against fixed-term employees** (Fixed-term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002) is unlawful when treatment of fixed-term employees is less favourable *because* the employee is employed on a fixed-term contract, unless the different treatment is justified on objective grounds. Less favourable treatment will include, different terms and conditions of employment, exclusion from appropriate training opportunities because they are fixed-term and different leave entitlements.
- 5.2.8 **Discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief** is unlawful. Religion or belief is defined as 'any religion, religious belief or similar philosophical belief'. The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003 provide protections against discrimination or harassment during recruitment and selection, in relation to terms and conditions of employment and in relation to access to training, promotion or other employee benefit.
- 5.2.9 **Discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation** is unlawful; sexual orientation includes orientation towards the same sex, the opposite sex or both sexes. The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 provide protections against discrimination or harassment during recruitment and selection, in relation to terms and conditions of employment and in relation to access to training, promotion or other employee benefit.
- 5.2.10 **Discrimination on the grounds of age** will be unlawful from October 2006 under the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations, 2006. It will be unlawful to discriminate either directly or indirectly on the basis of age, unless it can be objectively justified as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. Age legislation protects workers of all ages, both old and young.

5.3 Ways in which discrimination might occur

5.3.1 Direct Discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when an individual receives less favourable treatment due to their age, disability, gender or gender re-assignment, marital status, sexual orientation, race, colour, nationality, ethnicity or

national origins, religion or belief, or contractual and work roles which cannot be justified by genuine occupational requirement.

5.3.2 **Indirect Discrimination**

Indirect discrimination occurs when a provision, criterion or practice which, although applied equally to all, is such that a considerably smaller proportion of people of a certain group can comply with it and it cannot be justified and is not legitimate. For example: age group, disability, gender or gender re-assignment, marital status, sexual orientation, race, colour, nationality, ethnicity or national origins, religion or belief, or contractual and work roles.

5.3.3 **Harassment**

Harassment can be defined as any behaviour that is unwanted by the recipient/complainant. It is the impact of the behaviour that is relevant and not the motive or intent behind it. Harassment covers a wide range of behaviours including (but not limited to); physical contact ranging from unnecessary touching or brushing against a person, to actual physical contact or serious assault; verbal and written harassment through making derogatory remarks or jokes, expression or discriminatory views and intimidating comments, pin ups, graffiti, using e-mail to send suggestive and unwanted remarks and/or graphics (including pornography) or other offensive material. Harassment due to age, disability, gender or gender re-assignment, marital status, sexual orientation, race, colour, nationality, ethnicity or national origins, religion or belief, or contractual and work roles is unlawful discrimination and in some circumstances can be a criminal offence.

Please see AHRC's Prevention of Harassment and Bullying policy and procedure for further information.

5.3.4 **Victimisation**

Discrimination can also occur through the victimisation of an individual who has made a complaint or allegation or given evidence or information about another in relation to discriminatory behaviour. This does not apply if the individual knowingly makes an allegation, or gives evidence or information, if the allegation, evidence or information was false and not given in good faith. This is supported by statements in the AHRC's Prevention of Harassment and Bullying policy.

5.4 **Implementation of the Equal Opportunities Policy**

5.4.1 In order to implement the policy the AHRC will take reasonable steps to:

- develop an action plan to ensure that the Equal Opportunities Policy is implemented;
- communicate the policy effectively to all its staff and applicants for jobs;
- make managers and supervisors aware of their responsibilities;
- give appropriate training and guidance, including training on induction and management courses and training for all those involved in selection and promotion assessments.

5.4.2 The effectiveness of the Equal Opportunities Policy will be monitored through the collection and analysis of statistical data on the gender,

ethnic origin, disability, and age, of all full-time and part-time staff and job applicants.

- 5.4.3 Progress on the implementation of this policy and any equal opportunities and diversity programmes will be reviewed on an annual basis in consultation with the recognised trade union/employee representatives.

5.5 Harassment and Bullying and Grievance Policies

- 5.5.1 Staff who believe that they have suffered any form of discrimination are entitled to raise the matter through the Grievance Procedures. Staff who believe they have suffered any form of harassment, bullying or victimisation are entitled to raise the matter through the Prevention of Harassment and Bullying policy and procedure. These procedures are available to all staff and further copies are available from the HR team. All such complaints will be dealt with seriously, sympathetically, fairly, without undue delay and, where appropriate, in confidence.
 - 5.5.2 Every effort will be made to ensure that workers making complaints are not victimised. Any complaint of victimisation will be dealt with seriously, without undue delay and, where practicable, in confidence. Proven cases of victimisation will be treated as gross misconduct and may, depending on the circumstances, result in summary dismissal (without notice or payment in lieu of notice).
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Appendix B Impact Assessments

An impact assessment checks whether an existing or future policy affects a particular equalities group adversely. The process can be divided into two parts, the screening process and the full impact assessment.

The screening process is an initial review of a policy to assess its impact as high, low or no impact. For those with high impact, it is then decided when a full impact assessment needs to be undertaken.

Screening Process

Step 1: identify the aims of the policy

Step 2: collect information to assess the relevance of the policy

No Impact: Exit process

Low Impact: Keep under review

High Impact: Do full assessment:

Full Impact Assessment

Step 3: Assess the likely impact for equalities of the relevant policy

Step 4: Consider alternative ways of achieving policy aims, if the assessment shows adverse impact

Step 5: Consult relevant stakeholders

Step 6: Decide whether or not to adopt the policy or what modifications will be made

Step 7: Develop monitoring arrangements to monitor the policy

Step 8: Publish the results of the assessment.

AHRC policies requiring impact assessment

AHRC will review its policies and procedures to determine which policies have the greatest relevance to the race, gender and disability duties, and will require a full impact assessment. This impact assessment will follow the steps outlined above.
