



EQUAL PAY STATEMENT AND OBJECTIVE

**Date of next review: Sept 2010
incorporating a published report**

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1. Introduction and Statement

North Highland College supports the principles of Equal Pay and is committed to ensuring that procedures are in place to determine pay and conditions of employment do not discriminate unlawfully and are free from bias.

It is in the College's interest to operate a fair pay system which is transparent and is based on objective criteria. The College is committed to taking action to ensure that equal pay is in place for like work, work rated as equivalent and work of equal value.

The College believes that in eliminating bias from pay systems it is promoting positive relations amongst staff, students and the wider community

1.1 Scope

The principle of Equal Pay applies to all employees of the Board of Management of North Highland College regardless of full or part-time status, supply, fixed term or permanent contractual status.

1.2 Objective

The objective of this Statement is to support good practice to eliminate bias from pay systems and to eliminate any unfair, unjust or unlawful practices that impact on pay. This statement also outlines the action that North Highland College intends to take to identify and address any existing pay gaps.

1.3 Definitions

For the purposes of this Statement and in line with relevant legislation, pay is defined as;

“The ordinary basic or minimum wage or salary and any other consideration, whether in cash or kind, which the worker receives directly or indirectly, in respect of his/her employment from his/her employer”

Pay, therefore includes pensions, discretionary bonuses and sick pay as well as other benefits of monetary value.

“Like work” is defined as work which is the same or broadly similar. This can be determined by a general consideration of the type of work involved and the skill and knowledge required to do them. Different job titles, job descriptions or contractual obligations do not necessarily rule out a like work claim.

“Work of equal value” is defined as work which is of broadly equal value when compared under headings such as effort, skill and decision making.

“Work rated as equivalent” is defined as work which has achieved the same or a similar number of points under a job evaluation scheme.

“Line Manager” is defined as the Manager to whom s/he directly reports.

An “Impact Assessment” of a policy, procedure or practice is a thorough and systematic analysis to determine whether it has a differential impact on a particular group.

1.4 Responsibilities

Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the Board of Management to ensure that employees are treated equitably.

It is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure that the actions to implement the Equal Pay Objective are carried out and resourced.

Specific responsibilities for ensuring correct implementation of procedures that determine pay lie with the Human Resource Section.

The Human Resource Section are responsible for ensuring that they apply procedures appropriately to ensure that initial starting salaries are consistent with this Statement. Line Managers are responsible for ensuring that job descriptions accurately reflect the duties undertaken by postholder to enable an accurate evaluation of roles.

The HR Manager is responsible for ensuring that this Statement is revised and maintained.

1.5 References

Equal Opportunities Commission – Code of Practice on Equal Pay
Close The Gap – Guidance for meeting the specific duty on Equal Pay
North Highland College Equality Schemes
North Highland College Impact Assessment

1.6 Factors which may contribute to a Gender Pay Gap

North Highland College recognises that a gender pay gap may not solely be caused by men and women receiving different rates of pay for doing the same or similar work. Within an organisation there may be other factors or employment practices which contribute to a Gender Pay Gap such as caring responsibilities. North Highland College has taken measures to addressing some of these factors and is committed to continuing these efforts.

1.6.1 Occupational Segregation

Women and men can tend to work within gender segregated occupations and the jobs that are most likely to be carried out by women, tend to be those associated with low pay.

Although further work is required in terms of monitoring gender by grade, North Highland College recognises that there is a higher level of female staff in the occupations of cleaning, catering, auxiliary and clerical work.

1.6.2 Pay Structures

It is recognised that pay structures can have a direct impact on the gender pay gap and work has been undertaken to address this in terms of the structures in place in North Highland College.

North Highland College operates salary placement procedures based on relevant qualifications and experience. This salary placement scheme is under review to ensure that any gender bias is eliminated and to ensure that the pay structures meet the needs of the College's objectives.

1.6.3 Caring Responsibilities

Women are more likely to have caring responsibilities which can result in them seeking part time work in order to balance their responsibilities. Certain employees have a legal right to request flexible working, for example parents of a child aged under 6 years (or aged under 18 if the child is disabled); the partner of a parent of such a child and the carer of an adult in need of care.

North Highland College recognises, however, that the opportunity to work flexibly, and thus strike a better balance between home and work responsibilities, can benefit all employees, their families and the College. In view of this, North Highland College has extended the right to request flexible working to all employees of the Board of Management, and undertakes to consider all such requests.

A range of forms of flexible working is available where practicable including term time working, flexible start/finish times and annualised hours, and staff at many different levels in the organisation, have benefited from that.

North Highland College has recently reviewed procedures regarding Parental Support (incorporating maternity, paternity, parental and adoption leave) and Absence from Work to assist employees in balancing work and home commitments.

1.6.4 Contract of Employment Structures

North Highland College has introduced part-time permanent contracts and annual contracts, replacing traditional temporary contracts which applied to a higher proportion of female employees. These contracts accrue the same salaries and benefits to full time contracts on a pro rata basis. Contracts of employment are reviewed on an annual basis.

Other measures have also been taken to ensure equality in the terms and conditions such as the removal of the 5 year qualifying period for an additional 5 days annual leave for support staff.

1.6.5 HR Policy and Procedure Structure

In recent years the College has identified and responded to gender-related issues in employment arrangements to address recruitment and other arrangements. The College's Equality Committee and the Staffing Committee of the Board of Management will monitor information, including gender balance, for such matters as number of applications for posts, appointments, grievances, disciplinaries, leavers and development and training. All Human Resource Policies and Procedures are subject to scheduled review including impact assessment.

1.7 Future Actions to implement the Equal Pay Objective

Over the next three years North Highland College will:

	Action	Responsibility	Timescale
1.7.1	Undertake a review of the Salary Placement Scheme for staff in partnership with staff representatives	HR Manager with JCG / Staffing Sub	June 2008
1.7.2	Monitor the gender balance of staff by length of service	HR Manager	December 2007
1.7.3	Monitor the gender balance of staff by position and grade	HR Manager	December 2007
1.7.4	Monitor the gender balance of types of contracts	HR Manager	December 2007
1.7.5	Formulate an appropriate objective or objectives to address any gender gaps identified	HR Manager	January 2008 and 2009
1.7.6	Determine the scope for an Equal Pay Audit in partnership with staff representatives	Principal	March 2008
1.7.7	Evaluate the effectiveness of custom made job evaluation schemes, exploring possibilities with staff and Board.	Principal / HR Manager	December 2008
1.7.8	Review pay determining procedures on a rolling basis ensuring that appropriate impact assessment is carried out	HR Manager	Ongoing

1.8 Complaints

Complaints or enquiries about the lack of equal pay should, in the first instance, be made to the HR Manager. If this informal approach does not satisfy the employee then the HR Manager will refer the matter to the appropriate line manager in accordance with the North Highland College Grievance Procedure.