

Information for Students on Equality and Diversity

Different groups are classified by the Government under the title of *Protected Characteristics* - you may belong to one, or more, of these groups.

When you fill out an Application Form you will be asked about your *Protected Characteristics*. We ask for this information so we can gather data in order to make positive changes to the way the college works and to make sure you are properly supported while you are studying here.

The characteristics you will be asked about are set out by the government and are about Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion and Belief (including lack of belief) Sex and Sexual Orientation

The table below helps you to understand what these terms actually mean:

Protected Characteristic	What does it mean?
Age	This means you should not be treated differently because of your age.
Disability	<p>A disability can be a physical difficulty, mental impairment or a specific learning difficulty. For example, someone with a physical disability may have mobility problems. Someone with a specific learning difficulty may be dyslexic or autistic.</p> <p>The Equalities act defines this as “a <i>physical or mental impairment that has a ‘substantial’ and ‘long-term’ negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities.</i>”</p>
Gender reassignment	People who choose to live as a male when they were born a female, or to live as a female when they were born a male. A person has the protected characteristic if they are going to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone the process.
Pregnancy and Maternity	Pregnancy refers to women who are expecting a baby. Maternity refers to women who have a baby.
Race	Refers to colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin.
Religion and belief (including lack of belief)	You may hold a religious belief and you may also practice a religion. You may be someone who has no religious belief or practice. You may hold beliefs that

	are not about religion. For example, you may believe in animal rights or environmental practices.
Sex	This refers to whether you are a male or a female.
Sexual Orientation	<p>Refers to the type of feelings you experience and which attract you to other people. It's about who you're attracted to, fall in love with and want to live your life with.</p> <p>Heterosexual – the majority of men and women are heterosexual and they seek partners of the opposite sex.</p> <p>Gay – is a term that is used to describe a man who has feelings which are emotional and sexual towards men.</p> <p>Lesbian (and gay) – describes women who have an emotional and/or sexual feelings for women.</p> <p>Bisexual – describes women and men who experience erotic and romantic feelings for both their own and the opposite sex.</p>

West Lothian College is committed to providing **equal opportunities** in every part of college life. This is important as it affects how we expect you to act during your time here and also makes sure that you, as an individual, are treated fairly and equally.

The college decision making and planning is built around Core Values - you can read more about this on the college website under the link to Equality and Diversity.

The college has a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to:

- Get rid of unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Push for fair chances for people from **different groups**
- Help people from **different groups** to get on with each other