

# Equality and Diversity in Higher Education

APRIL 2020

The college/centre recognises that discrimination and victimisation is unacceptable and that it is in the interests of the organisation and its employees to utilise the skills of the total workforce. It is the aim to ensure that no student, employee or other representative of the organisation receives less favourable facilities or treatment (either directly or indirectly) in recruitment or employment on grounds of age, disability, gender/gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation (protected characteristics).

Our aim is that our workforce will be truly representative of all sections of society and each student and employee feels respected and able to give of their best.

We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination or victimisation. To that end the purpose of this policy is to provide equality and fairness for all.

### **Avoiding Discrimination**

These come in a variety of forms including the following:

- Written examinations.
- Vivas, orals and presentations.
- Practicals and performances.
- Dissertations and coursework.
- Work-based assessment.

It is important to ensure that the college/centre do not discriminate against students with protected characteristics. Assuming a uniformity in students' cultural, linguistic, religious or lifestyle experiences could result in college/centre for example, indirectly discriminating against students from racial groups.

It is also important to try to avoid discriminating indirectly against students in the timing of examinations and assessments. For example students, may have difficulty attending examinations or assessments because of issues surrounding the side effects of medication, religious prayer times or festivals or caring responsibilities

This policy and the associated arrangements shall operate in accordance with statutory requirements, particularly Equality Act 2010 <https://www.gov.uk/equality-act-2010-guidance>. In addition, full account will be taken of any guidance or Codes of Practice issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, any Government Departments, and any other statutory bodies.

## **Our Commitment**

- To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our staff are recognised and valued;
- Every employee and every learner is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated;
- Training, development and progression opportunities will be available to all staff;
- To promote equality in the workplace and the learning environment, which we believe is good management practice and makes sound business sense;
- We will review all our employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness;
- Breaches of our equality policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings;
- This policy is fully supported by senior management and has been agreed with employee representatives;
- The policy document will be monitored and reviewed every five years or more frequently if required.

## **Responsibility of Management**

Responsibility for ensuring the effective implementation and operation of the arrangements will rest with the college Principal or centre management team. Directors and managers will ensure that they and their staff operate within this policy and arrangements, and that all reasonable and practical steps are taken to avoid discrimination. Each manager will ensure that:

- all their staff are aware of the policy and the arrangements, and the reasons for the policy;
- complaints/grievances concerning discrimination are dealt with properly, fairly and as quickly as possible;
- proper records are maintained and that we comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Act and the associated Qualifi policies.

The college/centre principal administrator will nominate a person who will be responsible for monitoring the operation of the policy in respect of employees and job applicants, including periodic departmental audits.

## **Responsibility of Staff**

Responsibility for ensuring that there is no unlawful discrimination rests with all staff and the attitudes of staff are crucial to the successful operation of fair employment practices. In particular, all members of staff should:

- comply with the policy and arrangements;

- not discriminate in their day to day activities or induce others to do so;
- not victimise, harass or intimidate other staff or students or groups who have, or are perceived to have one of the protected characteristics;
- ensure no individual is discriminated against or harassed because of their association with another individual who has a protected characteristic;
- inform their manager if they become aware of any discriminatory practice.

### **Third Parties**

Third-party harassment occurs where an employee is harassed, and the harassment is related to a protected characteristic, by third parties such as clients or customers. This organisation will not tolerate such actions against its staff, and the employee or other representative concerned should inform their manager or a senior member of staff, at once, that this has occurred. The appointed person responsible for monitoring equality and diversity will fully investigate and take all reasonable steps to ensure such harassment does not happen again. The issues will be reported to the senior management team and the appropriate director level within the organisation.

### **Related Policies and Arrangements**

All employment policies and arrangements have a bearing on equality of opportunity. This company's policies will be reviewed every five years or more frequently if required and any discriminatory elements removed.

### **Rights of People with Disabilities**

This college/centre attaches particular importance to the needs of people with disabilities. Under the terms of this policy, managers are required to:

- make reasonable adjustment to maintain the services of an employee or other representative opportunities who becomes disabled, for example, training, provision of special equipment, reduced working hours. (NOTE: managers are expected to seek advice on the availability of advice and guidance from external agencies to maintain disabled people in employment);
- include disabled people in training/development programmes;
- give full and proper consideration to disabled people who apply for jobs or for learning programmes, having regard to making reasonable adjustments for their particular aptitudes and abilities to allow them to be able to do the job or the learning programme.

### **Equality Training**

Equality information is also included in induction programmes for both employees and students. Training will be provided for managers on this policy and the associated arrangements. All managers who have an involvement in the recruitment and selection process will receive specialist training.

Staff training records of all training, including equality will be maintained.

# Equality of Opportunity in Assessment

## **Overall structure of the qualifications**

We are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for Students in the overall design of our qualifications and units, in order to widen participation, by:

- involving Learner representatives in the design of our qualifications and units to avoid unjustified barriers to entry;
- allowing Centres to design and adapt their course design and delivery to reflect the needs of Students or groups, providing all the generic requirements of the qualification are met;
- designing an assessment process (as defined by the minimum assessment requirements) that accommodates different learning styles and needs;
- giving equal weight to tutor assessment of Students and thus recognising that they are best placed to assess their Students' individual learning needs and capability;
- using language that is free from bias and appropriate for the target group.

## **Internal assessment**

We are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for students in the college/centre, in order to widen participation, by describing clear entry pathways to training, supported by Qualifi, for students and clear guidelines given by Qualifi relating to Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and credit transfer which recognises other training and experience, requiring all Qualifi approved colleges/centres to have:

- an appropriate Learner support system in place, coherent and proactive framework for widening access and working with Learner diversity (including individual learning needs);
- arrangements in place for Students with special assessment needs;
- ensuring these requirements are consistently being met by reviewing these as outlined in the Qualifi quality assurance remit;
- providing clear guidelines and systems for staff to request Reasonable Adjustments.

## **Monitoring**

- The college/centre deems it appropriate to state its intention not to discriminate and that this will be translated into practice consistently across the organisation as a whole. Accordingly, a monitoring system will be introduced to measure the effectiveness of the policy and its arrangements;
- The system will involve the routine collection and analysis of information on employers and students by gender, marital status, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion and beliefs. Analysis of employees by grade and length of service in current grade will be made. Information regarding the number of staff who declares themselves as disabled will also be maintained;
- There will also be regular assessments to measure the extent to which recruitment to first appointment, internal promotion and access to training and development opportunities affect equal opportunities for all groups;
- We will maintain information on staff who have been involved in certain key policies: eg Disciplinary, Appeals and Complaints;
- Where appropriate equality impact assessments will be carried out on the results of monitoring to ascertain the effect of the company policies and our services and services may have on those who experience them;
- The information collected for monitoring purposes will be treated as confidential and it will not be used for any other purpose;
- If monitoring shows that the college/centre, or areas within it, is not representative, or that sections of our workforce are not progressing properly within the company, then an action plan will be developed to address these issues. This will include a review of recruitment and selection procedures, relevant college/centre policies and practices as well as consideration of taking legal positive action.

## **Appeals and Complaints**

Students, employees and other college/centre representative have a right to pursue a complaint concerning discrimination or victimisation via the college/centre Appeals and Complaints policy.

Discrimination and victimisation will be treated as disciplinary offences and they will be dealt with under the company Disciplinary Procedure.

## **Communication within a College/Centre**

It is important that both your staff involved in the management, assessment and quality assurance of our programmes and your students undertaking our programmes are fully aware of the contents of the Policy. Please ensure that you have made your staff and all Users in the centre aware of the Policy. On their centre visits, any Qualifi appointed persons may check that you have not only received the Policy but also made your relevant staff and all your students aware of its contents and purpose.

If you have complained to us and are still unhappy with the outcome, you can take your complaint Qualifi, the awarding organisation responsible for the development, delivery and awarding of regulated and unregulated qualifications. If there is still no satisfactory outcome, you may wish to write to Ofqual, the UK regulators of qualifications who will review the appeal/complaints. You can make Ofqual aware of your complaint by letter, phone or email.

Ofqual, Regulatory Relationships, Spring Place, Herald Avenue, Coventry, CV5 6UB -  
Telephone: 0300 303 3346 | [info@ofqual.gov.uk](mailto:info@ofqual.gov.uk)

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