

Equality and Diversity Policy – Guidance to Learners

Policy

We promote a working environment in which diversity is recognised, valued and encouraged. We acknowledge the multi-cultural and diverse nature of the UK workforce and society in general. We are committed to principles of fairness and mutual respect where everyone accepts the concept of individual responsibility. These principles are embedded into OWNIT Academy's selection, recruitment, programme delivery, assessment and quality management/assurance. We recognise that discrimination in the workplace/provision of training in any form is unacceptable and in most cases unlawful. We view any breach seriously. We **will** investigate and potentially take appropriate action where necessary when OWNIT Academy's procedures are not followed by staff members or our learners.

Definitions and Protected Characteristics

For the purposes of this policy OWNIT Academy's has adopted the following definitions:

1. Diversity means recognizing, valuing and taking account of people's different backgrounds, knowledge, skills and experiences, and encouraging and using those differences to make the way we work and learn more creative, efficient and innovative.
2. Direct discrimination is treating a person less favourably than others due to a protected characteristic.
3. Indirect discrimination is the applying of a requirement or condition, which, although applied equally to everyone, is such that a considerably smaller proportion of a particular group can comply with it and it cannot be justified.
4. Harassment is the violation of a learner's dignity, or, the creation of an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment relating to a protected characteristic.
5. Victimization arises where someone is treated badly because they have made a complaint or helped someone else make a complaint by giving evidence

No learner, or anyone our organisation deals with, receives less favourable treatment because of their protected characteristics. The protected characteristics are:-

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin)
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

OWNIT Academy's Stance

In adhering with this stance OWNIT Academy ensures equality of treatment for all by aiming to:

- Raise awareness of equality and diversity
- Ensure that you are never discriminated against or receive less favourable treatment because of a protective characteristic
- Acknowledge any issues that could be defined as discrimination, victimisation or harassment with an appropriately sensitive and prompt investigation
- Comply with YMCA Awards in making suitable reasonable adjustments (https://www.ymcaawards.co.uk/sites/ymcaawards.co.uk/files/policies-and-procedures/ymcaawards_reasonable_adjustments_and_special_consideration_policy.pdf) which can apply to all of the listed protected characteristics.

Your Personal Responsibilities

Each and every one of us is a stakeholder in the success of this policy. We expect you to make a positive contribution towards maintaining an environment of equal opportunity throughout the organisation. Please make sure you observe this policy at all times. In particular, you have individual responsibility to adopt the following:

- Do not take unlawful discriminatory actions or decisions contrary to the spirit of this policy
- Do not discriminate against, harass, abuse or intimidate anyone on account of their protected characteristics
- Do not place pressure on any other learners to act in a discriminatory manner
- Resist pressure to discriminate placed on you by others and report such approaches to an appropriate member of staff
- Co-operate when we investigate, including providing evidence of conduct which may amount to discrimination
- Co-operate with any measures introduced to develop or monitor equal opportunity

Discrimination is not just treating one person less favourably than another. It can take place because:-

- someone associates with a person with a protected characteristic;
- someone is believed to possess a protected characteristic (even though they do not);

We expect you to treat, and be treated by, other learners and the people our organisation deals with considerately and with respect.

Where You Encounter Discrimination

- If you feel subject to discrimination of any kind as identified within this policy, make clear to the individual concerned that you find it unacceptable. Person-to-person discussion at an early stage may be enough to resolve your concern without involving anyone else. Alternatively, seek the help of a trusted colleague (e.g. a fellow learner or a trusted member of staff) and ask them to approach whoever has caused you offence.
- If discrimination continues, or you consider an instance to be particularly serious, you should consider who to highlight the issue with. For the majority of cases this will likely to be the tutor or assessor. However, we appreciate that this staff member may be implicated in your concern and therefore when this happens, they should approach the tutor/assessors line manager or the designated internal verifier.
- The staff member approached will carry out a suitable documented investigation or where more appropriate will refer the issue to an appropriate individual responsible for this area within the company. Typically this will be the lead tutor or the IQA if the lead tutor is implicated.

- The result of the investigation into alleged discrimination will be communicated to you with information including the action taken and outcome highlighted if applicable or appropriate.
- If you feel dissatisfied about the outcome of the investigation and you want to appeal then you will need to contact David Francis within five working days of receiving the outcome, who will carry out a review these concerns.

Thank you for your contribution and commitment to making our policy work.

Contact us

If you have any queries about the contents of this policy, please contact David Francis via David@ownitacademy.co.uk