

# Equality and Diversity Policy



## **Introduction**

This policy sets out the commitment of the Action Learning Centres, and senior management, to promote equality of opportunity and work to eliminate any unlawful or unfair discrimination and harassment in the workplace or at study. It applies to all aspects of staff and student activity.

Action Learning Centres recognise the real educational and business benefits of having a diverse community of staff and students who value one another and the different contributions they can make.

We are committed to providing equality for all irrespective of:

- Age
- Disability
- Ethnicity (including race, colour and nationality)
- Gender
- Gender reassignment
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity

Under the Equality Act (2010) these are known as 'protected characteristics'.

We will work to ensure that all of our students, employees and visitors, as well as those who apply or seek to apply to work or learn with us, are treated fairly and are not subjected to discrimination by Action Learning on any of these grounds.

## **Commitments**

We will:

- Value diversity and promote equality of opportunity for all
- Promote respect and encourage good relations within and between groups
- Aim to meet the different needs of different groups, as appropriate, whilst promoting shared values
- Promote an inclusive and harmonious place of work and study where there is mutual respect and where harassment and bullying, intimidation or violence is not tolerated
- Prevent unlawful discrimination and victimisation
- Comply with our legal obligations
- Take seriously and address any breaches of this policy

Version 3

To be updated March 2017

Signed Manager

M. Martin



## **Responsibilities**

The Manager and Director of Action Learning, has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that this policy is fully implemented. Each staff member is accountable for delivering the equality commitments in their areas of responsibility.

All staff and students, those carrying out work or delivering services on behalf of the Action Learning and our partners, are required to comply with this policy. Everyone is required to promote a culture free from illegal discrimination and all forms of harassment and bullying. In addition, failure to adhere to these responsibilities under the law may lead to civil actions or criminal proceedings.

*Any incidents of discrimination, harassment or bullying will be investigated and may be grounds for expulsion or dismissal.*

## **How We Will Implement this Policy**

The Manager will ensure that:

- Staff and students are aware of the equality and diversity policies and the procedures for making a complaint
- The implementation of all equality policies and schemes is monitored and progress reported.
- Equality is taken into consideration, where appropriate, in policies and schemes is monitored and progress reported.
- Equality is taken into consideration, where appropriate, in policies, strategies and procedures to ensure that they promote equality and do not unlawfully discriminate.
- Staff, students are free and open to discuss equality and diversity issues and raise any concerns, with the manager or director. These will be recorded.
- Procedures are in place for the fair appointment, promotion, and development of staff, and the fair selection, teaching and assessment of students, free from unjustifiable discrimination
- Managers and staff are provided with appropriate equality training and development Educare LTD.
- Compliance with the equality policies is part of the job descriptions of all staff.
- Actions by all staff to implement the equality policies and scheme will be reviewed on a yearly basis.
- We seek commitments from our suppliers that they are taking steps to promote equality and eliminate discrimination.
- There are sufficient resources in place to implement this policy effectively.

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Everyone is expected to:

- Support and implement the equality and diversity policies and
- Ensure that their behaviour and/or actions do not amount to discrimination or harassment in any way.

### **Policy Review**

We will keep this policy under review and will regularly assess the progress we are making toward achieving our equality commitments. We will take action when we identify areas where inequality or discrimination may be considered to exist.

### **Complaints of Discrimination**

If a student, member of staff or visitor believes that they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation Action Learning takes this very seriously. All complaints will be dealt with in accordance with agreed procedures. Anyone who makes a complaint of discrimination will not be victimised and we will make every effort to ensure victimisation does not occur and that any complaints are dealt with promptly.

Students can raise this matter through the Complaints Procedure. Details are available in the Induction book and the policy is displayed in the classroom.

Staff can raise this through the Grievance Procedure. Details are available from HR.

Members of the public should address their complaint to the Manager.

Action Learning has a separate policy relating to bullying which also sets out the specific procedure for seeking support or making a complaint in relation to harassment or bullying.

### **Language**

Prejudice and discrimination may arise and be reinforced by our use of language, which may not be neutral and value-free. Words and phrases can be associated with apparently negative attitudes and may unwittingly give offence to people including members of groups that are subject to prejudice, harassment or discrimination.

Everyone is expected to seek to ensure that their written, spoken and electronically transmitted or published material does not contain language that may knowingly cause offence to others. Rather than be prescriptive about use of language, staff and students are asked to exercise good judgment and be aware of common, inappropriate or offensive references in relation to the protected characteristics.

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### **The Student Experience**

We welcome and support people with disabilities, including specific learning disabilities, and will make reasonable adjustments and endeavor to meet specific requirements.

Learning materials should be non-discriminatory. If discriminatory material is used to make a point, the discriminatory nature should be pointed out by the staff member using the material.

Advice and Support – counseling and advice for students relating to discrimination, harassment and bullying is available from outside agencies, and students and staff can obtain this information freely.

### **The Staff Experience**

Recruitment – all appropriately qualified applicants will be given equal consideration during the recruitment process and will not be discriminated against on any grounds referred to in a paragraph 1.3 of this policy statement. A recruitment monitoring form will be sent with all application forms. Information gathered on this form will not be used in the selection process and will only be used for monitoring purposes by the Equality and Diversity Unit.

Selection and Promotion – Selection criteria for all posts will be clearly defined and reflected in the Job Description, Person Specification or Further Particulars. Shortlisting and interviewing processes will be thorough, carried out objectively and without illegal discrimination. All staff involved in these processes will be appropriately trained in recruitment and selection and be aware of relevant employment legislation. Interview and Promotion Panels will include both genders, other than in exceptional circumstances which must be referred to the Human Resources Department. Action Learning welcomes applications from suitably qualified disabled people and will make reasonable adjustments to the selection process and to the workplace and working arrangements to accommodate successful disabled candidates.

Working Conditions – Action Learning will take account of the needs of individual members of staff and, wherever reasonably practicable, will use flexitime, flexible working and/or special contractual terms (for example, job shares, fractional contracts etc.), to assist with issues such religious observance and caring dependents, in line with the relevant legislation.

Staff Development – Action Learning Centres will not discriminate on any grounds referred to in this policy statement, in the provision of training and development to assist staff, (part-time or full time, permanent or fixed term), to perform their jobs more effectively. Staff will be provided with, and expected to undertake, appropriate development to enable them to implement all policies professionally and in the correct manner. Training and development

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of staff will be recorded and monitored.

Advice and Support – is available from HR. Specific advice for staff in connection with the learning, teaching and support of disabled students is available from the Disability ASISST Services.

### **Advertising and Information**

Information regarding staff vacancies will be circulated throughout Action Learning and all posts will be advertised externally and on Action Learning's website, unless there are justifiable reasons to do otherwise, which have been agreed by the Human Resources Department.

### **Publication of this Policy**

This policy will be published on the Action Learning website and policy folder. It will also be drawn to the attention of all staff, students and other interested parties.