

Apprenticeship Policies Equality and Diversity

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Equal Opportunities and Diversity

What this policy covers

UKFAST recognises the benefits of a diverse workforce and is committed to providing a learning environment that is free from discrimination.

UKFAST will seek to promote the principles of equality and diversity in all its dealings with apprentices, employees, workers, job applicants, clients, customers, suppliers, contractors, recruitment agencies, educational partners, and the public.

All employees and those who act on UKFast's behalf are required to adhere to this policy when undertaking their duties or when representing the Company in any other guise.

The policy lines up with the Equality Act 2010. The policy sets out the ways in which we look to support induction around the 9 major protected characteristics.

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

Promotion of Equality and Diversity

- All learners and new staff will have training on what the Equality and Diversity Policy is as well as the Equality Act 2010 during induction.
- All staff will promote equal opportunity and diversity to external employers and/or other parties who would be working alongside our learners.
- Through the PSHCE programme elements of EDI will be discussed and taught throughout the learners time our programme.
- This policy should be accessible to all staff and learners
- Refreshers will be implemented throughout their time of employment to ensure awareness and ability to discuss this with all stakeholders.
- Professional Development sessions with small group of learners will be carried out periodically with specific reference to topics relating to Equality and Diversity.

- The structure of the team includes a Progress Manager and an Apprentice Support Manager who can ensure that all learners feel safe and will be available to talk to any learner who needs to discuss any discrimination they may have faced. This structure is made available to all learners, so they are aware of where to get support.
- Learners will be made aware of a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination from day one in their induction.
- Learners will be encouraged to learn from each other, participate in any activities involving equality and diversity, both within the learning environment but also the wider business.
- Diversity will be actively celebrated and endorsed through recognising key events / religious days.

Roles and Responsibilities

Head of Apprenticeships

- Ensure that the policy is updated and reviewed once a year, or before if there are any changes to the Equality Act 2010
- Make sure there are proper arrangements made that ensure awareness of the this policy is implemented both by the staff but also any other employee who works closely with the learners
- Monitor the success of this policy and report back to the board and trustees of the provider.
- Ensure that there is a widely known process for complaints regarding discrimination that can be followed effectively.
- Ensure that the environment for learners is safe and ensure there is confidence that a learner can raise any concerns they have.

Progress Manager / Apprentice Support Manager

- Ensure that promotion of Equality and Diversity amongst staff
- Liaise with the Head of Apprenticeships to regularly to discuss any issues relating to Equality and Diversity
- Contribute towards ensuring learners feel confident and secure in raising any issues or concerns they have regarding equality and diversity
- Work with all staff and learners to ensure that any training needs are met where their knowledge gaps and where a refresher is needed
- Use data, reviews, and any complaints to further inform this policy and suggest any improvements that could be made.
- Liaise with teaching staff to ensure that the curriculum includes equality and diversity

Staff Responsibilities

- Subject leaders must adhere to and promote the policy by embedding topics of equality and diversity into the curriculum
- Ensure that awareness of the key principles of respect, friendship and understanding of religions and cultures is promoted to all learners.
- Report any issues or concerns that have been raised by a specific learner or all learners to the Support or Progress manager
- Any equality incidents should be recorded as per the complaints process
- Challenge attitudes that are unsupportive of the equality and diversity policy
- Contribute to the promotion of a tolerant and supportive ethos
- Schedule and plan assessments or reviews with a focus on the individual learners needs
- Make all learners aware of facilities that they may need in line with this policy, examples would be prayer room, access to the building and each floor and desk assessments.

Procedure / Process for Complaints

Recruitment

Our commitment is to ensure our recruitment process (for staff and apprentices) is inclusive and fair. It is important that the planning of recruitment is completed to ensure all have access to the process and that all can succeed.

- We deliver outreach to the local community allow all access to the office and careers sessions to help them understand careers options that are available.
- Our recruitment process is accessible. We have a recruitment team in place that assess the recruitment methods and that all candidates have fair access.
- We will work with our HR teams occupational health outreach to ensure that we can adapt workplaces to meet the needs of candidates where necessary.
- We complete a generic score card system which allows us to make judgement on skill and ability to complete the roll.

Unlawful discrimination

Unlawful discrimination of any kind in the working environment will not be tolerated and the Company will take all necessary action to prevent its occurrence.

Specifically, the Company aims to ensure that no apprentice, employee or job applicant is subject to unlawful discrimination, either directly or indirectly, on the grounds of gender, gender reassignment, race (including colour, nationality, caste and ethnic origin), disability, sexual orientation, marital status, part-time status,

pregnancy or maternity, age, religion or belief, political belief or affiliation or trade union membership. This commitment applies to all aspects of employment, including:

- recruitment and selection, including advertisements, job descriptions, interview and selection procedures
- training and education
- apprenticeship delivery
- promotion and career-development opportunities
- terms and conditions of employment, and access to employment-related benefits and facilities
- grievance handling and the application of disciplinary procedures
- selection for redundancy

Equal opportunities practice is developing constantly as social attitudes and legislation change. The Company will review all policies and implement necessary changes where these could improve equality of opportunity.

Recruitment of ex-offenders

The Company actively promotes equality of opportunity for all candidates, including those with criminal records where appropriate.

The Company requires you to provide details of any criminal record at an early stage in the application process. Any such information should be sent in a separate confidential letter to the designated person. Only those who need to see it as a formal part of the recruitment process will have access to this information.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily prevent you from being appointed.

Any recruitment decision will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of the offence(s). The Company will discuss with you the relevance of any offence to the job in question.

If you fail to reveal any information relating to disclosures in accordance with the Company's Disclosures Policy, this may lead to the withdrawal of an offer of employment.

The Company's policy in relation to the handling of criminal records data is contained in the Disclosure and Disclosure Information Policy.

Career development

While positive measures may be taken to encourage under-represented groups to apply for apprenticeship roles, employment opportunities, recruitment or promotion to all jobs will be based solely on merit.

All employees will have equal access to apprenticeship programmes, training and other career-development opportunities appropriate to their experience and abilities.

However, the Company will take appropriate positive action measures (as permitted by equal opportunities legislation) to provide specialist training, apprenticeships, and support for groups that are under-represented in the workforce and encourage them to take up training and career-development opportunities.

Procedure for complaints

Complaints of discrimination

The Company will treat seriously all complaints of discrimination made by apprentices, employees, clients, customers, suppliers, contractors or other third parties and will take action where appropriate.

If you believe that you have been discriminated against, you are encouraged to raise the matter as soon as possible with your manager or other senior employee using the Company's 'Raising a Concern' Policy. From this the correct procedures will be followed to ensure the complaint is heard.

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated thoroughly. If you make an allegation of discrimination, the Company is committed to ensuring that you are protected from victimisation, harassment, or less favourable treatment. Any such incidents will be dealt with under the Company's Disciplinary Procedures.

Investigating accusations of unlawful discrimination by staff and students.

If you are accused of unlawful discrimination, the Company will investigate the matter fully.

During the investigation, you will be given the opportunity to respond to the allegation and provide an explanation of your actions.

If the investigation concludes that the claim is false or malicious, the complainant may be subject to disciplinary action.

If the investigation concludes that your actions amount to unlawful discrimination, you will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal without notice for gross misconduct.

Equal Opportunities Monitoring

The Company may carry out monitoring for the purposes of measuring the effectiveness of its equal opportunities and diversity policy. This will be reported to board and any concerns raised and discussed. The success of the policy will also be monitored and reported to board.