

Equal Opportunities Policy

[Version 1.3]

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Policy Approver	QAC	Effective Date	25/01/2018		

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Institute for Education (IfE) is committed in its pursuit of academic excellence to equality of opportunity and to a pro-active and inclusive approach to equality, which supports and encourages all under-represented groups, promotes an inclusive culture, and values diversity. This commitment is underpinned by the IfE's core values, expressed in its mission statement:

The IfE is therefore committed to a policy and practice which require that, for course participants, admission to the IfE and progression within courses will be determined only by personal merit and by performance. For employees, entry into employment with the IfE and career progression will be determined only by personal merit and by the application of criteria which are related to the duties and conditions of each particular post and the needs of the institution concerned.

2. Policy Statement

- 2.1 The IfE will positively advance equality of opportunity for all current and potential course participants, staff and its other stakeholders. It will not discriminate unfairly on the basis of gender and family responsibilities, pregnancy and maternity, disability, race, ethnic or national origin, age, sexual orientation, socio economic background, religion and belief, political beliefs, family circumstances including marriage and civil partnership and trade union membership.

3. Definition of terms

- 3.1 **Direct discrimination** - a person is treated less favourably than another person in a comparable situation.
- 3.2 **Indirect discrimination** – where an apparently neutral provision (criterion or practice) would put a person at a particular disadvantage compared to other individuals (unless is objectively justified by a legitimate aim and the means of achieving that aim are appropriate and necessary).
- 3.3 **Harassment** takes place with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person and of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

4. Procedures

4.1 Characteristics of protected groups are defined in Chapter 456 of the [Equality for Men and Women Act](#) as: sex and family responsibilities, age, race/ethnic origin, religion/belief, sexual orientation and gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics. The IfE respects all religious and philosophical beliefs, as well as the lack of religion or belief, and the right of all members of its community to discuss and debate these issues freely.

4.2 The IfE will take active steps to promote good practice. In particular it will:

- Work towards the elimination of unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimization based on a protected characteristic, whether actual, perceptive, or associative.
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- Subject its policies to continuous assessment in order to examine how they affect protected groups and to identify whether its policies help to achieve equality of opportunity for all these groups, or whether they have an adverse impact.
- Monitor the recruitment and progress of all course participants and employees, collecting and collating equalities information and data as required by law or for the furtherance of the IfE's equalities objectives.
- Promote an inclusive culture, good practice in teaching, learning, and assessment, and good management practice, through the development of codes of best practice, policies, and training.
- Take positive action wherever possible to support this policy and its aims.
- Publish this policy widely amongst employees and students, together with policy assessments, equality analysis and results of monitoring.

4.3 The IfE will meet all statutory obligations under relevant legislation and, where appropriate, anticipate future legal requirements. This will be informed by:

- Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Act (2000)
- [Equality for Men and Women Act](#) (2003)
- [Employment and Industrial Relations Act](#) (2002)

- Equal Treatment of Persons Order In Relation To [Race/Ethnic Origin](#) (LN 2017)
- [Access to Goods and Services and their Supply \(Equal Treatment\) Regulations](#) (LN 2008)

5. Course Participants

The IfE is committed to offer all its course participants a holistic experience at the IfE which is positive, fair and inclusive. To this end, all members of staff will work towards:

5.1 Application

The IfE encourages applications from a diverse range of potential course participants, and where appropriate, undertakes initiatives to attract applications from under-represented groups. The IfE will ensure the publicity, information and guidance produced displays diverse images, is available in accessible formats and meets the needs of potential course participants from diverse backgrounds.

5.2 Admission

The IfE bases admissions solely on the course participant's ability to meet the requirements of the selection criteria for admissions and their potential to benefit from a successful completion of study. The IfE aims to ensure that course participants of all backgrounds are not discriminated against at all points of the admissions process. Applicants with a disability will be encouraged to discuss their needs so that the IfE can identify and accommodate reasonable adjustments that will enable them to participate fully throughout their learning journey.

5.3 Induction

The IfE makes all course participants aware during induction of the ways in which this policy affects them and their rights and responsibilities in relation to equal opportunities. This will apply particularly to equalities monitoring, opportunities to be involved in future equality research and the consultation activities and mechanisms that are in place to support and guide course participants with diverse needs. The IfE staff is vested to inform all course participants of the facilities and resources available to them.

5.4 Academic Progression

The IfE provides academic guidance and tutoring to support academic progression and with recognition and sensitivity to the different needs of course participants in relation to further and higher education.

5.5 Termination of Studies

The IfE ensures course participants have access to academic advice and guidance when considering termination of studies and monitoring any significant variations between different groups, including those belonging to the equality strands of age, caring responsibilities, disability, gender, nationality, race, religious belief (or no belief), sexual orientation, socio-economic class or gender identity.

5.6 Curriculum and Course Design

The IfE regularly reviews the design and content of the curriculum, timetabling and the teaching methods and materials used and existing processes to ensure that they are appropriate for diverse course participants and are compliant with the IfE's commitment to equality and accessibility.

5.7 Assessment

The IfE ensures that no bias exists in the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy and Procedures and makes reasonable adjustments to assessment methods to meet the needs of impaired course participants.

5.8 Work Placements/Practicum

The IfE ensures that where work placements/practicum is offered the arrangements are proportionate, transparent and provide course participants with comparable opportunities and experiences as far as possible. Providers/Schools will be informed of their responsibilities and will be encouraged to incorporate measures to monitor progress to ensure that the learning opportunities provided are appropriate and will refer to relevant guidance.

5.9 Research

The IfE encourages and supports diversity in course participant research activities and addresses the recruitment of postgraduate research course participant from under-represented groups.

5.10 Course Participant Support Services

The IfE offers support services that provide information, advice, guidance and counselling sensitive to the academic, personal and emotional needs of all course participants. Accessibility issues will be reviewed as regularly as possible.

5.11 Complaints and Appeals

All course participants will be made aware of the mechanism for reporting instances of discrimination or harassment through the IfE's [Complaints Policy and Procedures](#) and [Appeals Policy and Procedures](#).

6. Employees

This policy covers every aspect of the employment of staff, and will be issued to all following appointment at the IfE. Working in the ways described will mean we recruit and retain employees of the highest quality who will be motivated by the creative and diverse environment in which they work. To this end, we will work towards:

6.1 Recruitment and Selection

The IfE ensures that no bias exists in all stages of the recruitment and selection process. We will encourage applications through open competition and from all groups. Word of mouth recruitment as the sole method of selection will be unacceptable. Advertisements, placement of advertising and recruitment information will reflect this. Appointments will be made on personal merit and performance. Recruitment will be sensitive to the access requirements of disabled applicants at all stages of the process.

6.2 Contractual Status and Work-Life Balance

Where possible and on request, the IfE gives due regard to offering contracts that are appropriate to the type of work and accommodate the needs of those who wish to balance employment with caring responsibilities, reasonable adjustment needs, faith observance or other interests.

6.3 Job Description, Grading, Pay and Benefits

This is done through job descriptions and person specifications, job evaluation and reward policy, ensuring that there is equal pay for work of equal value.

6.4 Induction

As part of their induction, the IfE ensures that employees, and in particular managers, are aware of their responsibilities through training on diversity, and in the setting of their objectives for their Performance Plan.

6.5 Probation

The IfE ensures decisions on probation are based solely on the ability of employees to undertake duties and responsibilities of the role, to the standards required, and take into consideration any reasonable adjustments made to meet individual needs.

6.6 Employee Relations

The IfE ensures that procedures to handle complaints or conduct disciplinary matters are enacted fairly and effectively. The Human Resources Manager will provide advice, support and follow the formal procedures for redress for those who believe they are experiencing or for those who have received allegations against them of harassment, bullying, victimisation or any other form of unlawful discrimination.

6.7 Staff Development

The IfE ensures fair access for all staff development opportunities. To maintain the IfE's commitment to equality and diversity, every member of staff will be required to undertake mandatory training in equality and diversity. Managers will also receive specific training in addition to other support and resources from the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE)

6.8 Complaints

If any person admitted as a course participant or appointed as a member of staff considers that they are suffering from unlawful discrimination, harassment, or victimization in their admission, appointment, or progression through the IfE because of belonging to any of the above protected groups, they may make a complaint, which will be dealt with through the agreed procedures for complaints or grievances or the procedures for dealing with bullying and harassment, as appropriate;

- [Course Participants' Grievance Policy and Procedures](#)

- [Employee Grievance Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Course Participants’ Complaints Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Appeals Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedures for Course Participants](#)

6.8.1 The course participant or employee can also submit a written complaint to either the:

National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE)
 Gattard House,
 National Road,
 Blata l-Bajda HMR 9010

Or

Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD)
 G5 Offices
 Psaila Street
 Birkirkara

Or

Office of the Ombudsman
 11, St Paul Street
 Valletta VLT 1210
 Malta

7. Version history

Originator	Version	Date	Changes Done
QA Dept.	1.0	25/01/2018	Initial Release
QA Dept.	1.1	26/01/2021	Included an article: Deifinition of Terms Updated procedures
QA Dept.	1.2	26/04/2024	Updated links

QA Dept.	1.3	25/01/2025	Updated in line with re-branding guidelines
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