

Oxford Professional Education

Policy Date: December 2020

Reviewed: December 2023

Policy Review Date Dec 2024

Reference number 30

Equality and Diversity Policy

Scope

The Single Equality Policy is applicable to all staff and customers of Oxford Professional Education (OxPE).

Policy Statement

The Policy follows the Equality Act 2010 which harmonised all previous equality legislation into a single Act of Parliament. The Equality Act 2010 protects individuals from discrimination and harassment based on “Protected Characteristics”.

The Protected Characteristics are:

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

For all individuals, with due regard to the Protected Characteristics, OxPE has a duty to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimization
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations.

OxPE aims to ensure that no group or individual receives less favourable treatment by virtue of skin colour, race, gender, ethnic origin, disability, age, class, sexual orientation, religion, culture or faith, pregnancy and maternity status



or gender reassignment, thereby enabling all people to have equality of access to the provision of goods, services, facilities, premises and employment.

OxPE means to reduce and eliminate disadvantage, harassment, bullying, prejudice and discrimination by following legislation and taking positive action through transparent reporting procedures, taking swift action where issues are identified, and through the comprehensive adherence to related policies.

OxPE commits itself to promoting good practice and ensuring that the procedures and conduct of all staff give weight to this scheme which covers all areas of OxPE activity, putting Equality and Diversity at the heart of the organisation, and benefiting all.

OxPE recognises that students with SEND (special education needs and disability) are more likely to be abused and/or neglected. OxPE monitor and support these students through the collective work of the Apprenticeship Team in order to ensure these students are appropriately identified.

Related OxPE Documents

Staff should make themselves aware of the following related policies and procedures:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Public Interest Disclosure Policy

Our Vision

Every learner including Apprentices will be supported to excel and develop their talents and potential for employment and improve their life chances. OxPE is a learning community that:

- Encourages all its learners to embrace challenging learning goals and to realise their full potential
- Recognises, honours and reinforces the self-worth of all
- Recognises the dignity of difference
- Promotes the principles of sustainability
- Is committed to ensuring that fairness and integrity underpin everything that OxPE does
- Ensures people's ability to achieve their potential is not limited by prejudice or discrimination
- Is respectful and protects each individual's human rights
- Is respectful for the dignity and worth of each individual
- Ensures individual has an equal opportunity to participate in OxPE life and its wider environments
- Ensures a mutual respect between groups based on understanding and valuing diversity and on shared respect for equality and human rights.

All people working or studying at OxPE have a responsibility for upholding these values.



This Equality Policy document is intended to give a common-sense approach to the rights and responsibilities of all members of the OxPE community. It is given out as part of recruitment of OxPE staff, learner/apprentice and employer induction and is reinforced within Monthly Newsletters, Reviews and training.

OxPE actively promotes Equality and Diversity for all by removing barriers to education, training and employment opportunities, thereby widening access through a flexible and inclusive culture. Equality and Diversity applies to all of the OxPE activities, services we use and visits. It applies to all OxPE sites.

OxPE Equality Policy Expectations

OxPE will not tolerate any form of behaviour that is discriminatory, bullying, harassing or in contravention of either legislation or the OxPE ethos. OxPE regards any such behaviour as unacceptable and OxPE will fully investigate any incidents under the appropriate procedure (i.e. the relevant Disciplinary Procedure for Staff/learners) as appropriate.

Breaches of the Policy by learners, staff or visitors may result in disciplinary procedures that may lead to exclusion from OxPE or dismissal.

OxPE will create an environment in which positive relations are fostered. OxPE undertakes to provide:

- Appropriate training and support to create a positive, inclusive ethos
- A shared commitment to challenging and preventing stereotyping and discrimination
- A culture of respect for diversity and difference
- The encouragement of good relationships between people of different groups and will encourage any employers it works with to do the same.

OxPE has a specific duty to:

- Prepare and maintain an Equality Policy
- Monitor the admission and progress of students and the recruitment, and career progress of staff
- Set out arrangements for publishing the results of assessments and monitoring and, where reasonably practical, publish annually the results of assessments and all monitoring that takes place
- Make reasonable adjustments to ensure equality of opportunity is maintained.

All staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring that they are aware of OxPE's statutory duties in relation to race legislation and that they work within OxPE's Equality and Diversity Policy.

The OxPE Information System data relating to the Protected Characteristics is recorded, stored, processed and readily available. OxPE will use this information in equality impact assessments to ensure that:

- No individual or group is disadvantaged
- Identify where equality of opportunity can be promoted

- Investigate underlying causes
- Remove any unfairness or disadvantage and create reasonable adjustment.

The Senior Management Team are responsible for:

- Ensuring that the company meets all the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and meets all its duties, including the general duty and specific duties
- making sure that the Equality Policy and its procedures are followed
- taking the lead in creating a positive, inclusive ethos that challenges discriminatory behaviour on the part of managers, staff and learners
- giving a consistent and high-profile lead on Equality and Diversity
- ensuring that all staff are aware of OxPE's statutory duties in relation to the Single Equalities Policy
- putting the Policy and its strategies and procedures into practice
- ensuring internal verification procedures include sampling of Protected Characteristic groups.

When OxPE contract with or outsource to external organisations, the duty to promote Single Equalities is passed to that organisation. All contractors and providers of services are responsible for adhering to the OxPE Equality Policy, and any equality conditions in contracts or agreements.

Delivery Centres

We expect our centres to enable all learners and apprentices to have equal access to training and assessment for qualifications irrespective of their sex, marital status, age, religion, colour, race, nationality or ethnic origin or disability. Assessment must similarly be undertaken without discrimination. External Centres are required to have in place a policy to ensure that such discrimination does not occur either directly, indirectly or as a result of pressure from other bodies. This policy should apply to all satellite / associated venues and there should be arrangements in place to monitor its application and effectiveness.

Learners, including Apprentices, are required to:

- Adhere to the Student Code of Conduct
- Treat everyone politely and fairly
- Use language carefully and appropriately
- Resolve differences and disagreements amicably.

Apprenticeship Delivery

We will ensure through a comprehensive initial assessment process that all specific individual needs are taken into account when preparing the delivery programme for each apprentice. We will, as far as is reasonably practical, ensure fair and equal access to all apprentices to each of the apprenticeship standards and frameworks that we offer. When assisting



employers with Apprentice selection we will encourage fair treatment for all applicants and promote Equality and Diversity. As part of our Apprenticeship Employer induction, we give guidance on the Employers role to embed Equality and Diversity in the workplace and the apprenticeship. 12-weekly Reviews also cover Equality and Diversity to make sure the Apprentices are not being disadvantaged by OxPE or the Employer. We will work as a mediator for the Apprentice with their employer if matters of an E&D nature arise that need action and investigate and take appropriate action if any matters of an Equality and diversity nature are raised in relation to any OxPE delivery staff member.

Additional Staff Guidance

We commit to incorporating specific and appropriate duties in respect of implementing the equal opportunities policy into job descriptions and work objectives of all staff.

We will provide equality training and guidance as appropriate to our staff; including as part of their induction training. In addition, we will provide further on-going courses as identified via our internal staff performance review arrangements. All Apprenticeship delivery staff are given training on how to embed Equality and Diversity into our delivery, materials, and reviews within our Apprenticeships.

Qualification/Programme/Apprenticeship (Curriculum) Development

We will ensure that there are no features that could disadvantage any groups of learners or apprentices that share a characteristic or barriers to entry other than those directly related to the purpose of the units or qualifications. The nature of any such features or barriers will be stated and the inclusion of the requirements that create the barrier justified in terms why they are required for the unit or qualification.

We will ensure that there are no features contained in course materials or the delivery of those materials that will disadvantage any individual or groups of learners or apprentices. Equality and Diversity specific to each Apprenticeship Standard is planned into the lessons were appropriate.

Monitoring Progress

OxPE will monitor relevant information both internally and with apprentice employers to ensure that its commitment to Single Equality is being realised. Such data will also be used to set targets and measure our progress in achieving them.

Equality & Diversity will be discussed at Governors Meetings to monitor any equality & diversity issues and monitor progress against improving performance. The group will also be responsible for producing the Annual Development Plan to include Equality & Diversity.

OxPE undertakes, once the results of monitoring are available, to consider targets and actions to address any disadvantage of learners or employees. If monitoring reveals that a specific group is disadvantaged, targets will be set to eliminate this.

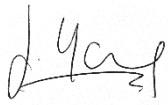
Action Planning Using all available internal and external information, OxPE will annually develop an action plan to address Equality and Diversity issues incorporated into OxPE's Improvement and Operational Department Plans including Curriculum, Human Resources and Business Development/Marketing.

The aim will be to:

- Close the achievement gap between different groups
- Promote awareness of Equality & Diversity matters
- Further promote a positive attitude towards Equality and Diversity

We will review the policy annually and revise it as and when necessary in response to customer/employer and learner/apprentice feedback, changes in our practices, actions from the regulatory authorities or external agencies (e.g. ESFA) or changes in legislation.

Where complaints relating to issues of inequality cannot be satisfactorily resolved, learners and apprentices will already be aware of their right to appeal via the arrangements outlined in our Appeals Policy.

Signed: 

Date: December 2022