

# **EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION POLICY**

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## **KEY POINTS**

- The Company is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all employees and job applicants.
- The Company does not discriminate against employees on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.
- If you believe you have been discriminated against or been subject to harassment, you are encouraged to raise the matter in accordance with the Company's Grievance Procedure or Anti- Harassment and Bullying Policy (as applicable).

## **POLICY IN DETAIL**

This policy does not form part of your contract of employment and the Company may amend it at any time.

The Company believes that everyone should be entitled to a fair and equal chance to succeed at the Company. This policy outlines the commitment of the Company to promoting equality of opportunity for all employees and job applicants. The Company seeks to create a working environment in which everyone is able to make best use of their skills, free from discrimination or harassment, and in which all decisions are based on merit.

The Company also recognises that it needs to draw on a diverse pool of talent and a range of strengths to be creative and effective in achieving its goals as a business. This diversity is a central part of the culture of the Company. Diversity is about looking for a blend of strengths and experiences when the Company builds teams. It is also about understanding that each individual is unique, and in recognising, respecting and celebrating the added value that differences bring.

Equality, diversity and inclusion is not about 'treating everyone the same' but recognising that everyone is different and that people's needs are met in different ways. This recognition means that the Company will support its employees' unique needs, such as those relating to religious beliefs or family responsibilities, where it is able to and in line with other policies.

### **Commitment to Equal Opportunities**

The Company does not discriminate against employees on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which the Company's employees treat visitors, clients, university partners, portfolio companies and their staff, customers, suppliers and former employees.

All employees have a duty to act in accordance with this policy and to treat colleagues with dignity at all times. Employees must not discriminate against or harass other employees, regardless of their status.

This policy applies to all aspects of the relationship between the Company and its employees and to relations between employees at all levels. This includes job advertisements, recruitment and selection, training and development, opportunities for promotion, conditions of service, pay and benefits, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and termination of employment.

### **Meeting your needs**

We all have our own personal responsibilities or needs that may overlap with work, for example observing certain religious practices, caring for elderly relatives, or caring for children. Wherever possible, the Company will seek to make it possible for you to meet your responsibilities outside of work, as long as business needs are not compromised in any way. As a starting point, you should discuss your personal circumstances with your Manager and refer to other appropriate policies including the Unpaid Parental Leave Policy, Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Policies, Shared Parental Leave Policy and Emergency, Compassionate and Bereavement Leave Policy.

### **Recruitment and selection**

Recruitment, promotion and other selection exercises such as redundancy selection will be conducted on the basis of merit against objective criteria that avoid discrimination. Shortlisting will be done by more than one person and with the involvement of HR.

Vacancies will generally be advertised to a diverse section of the labour market. Advertisements should avoid stereotyping or using wording that may discourage particular groups from applying.

Job applicants should not be asked questions which might suggest an intention to discriminate unlawfully.

Job applicants should not be asked about health or disability before a job offer is made. There are limited exceptions which should only be used with the approval of HR. For example:

- questions necessary to establish if an applicant can perform an intrinsic part of the job (subject to any reasonable adjustments);
- questions to establish if an applicant is fit to attend an assessment or any reasonable adjustments that may be needed at interview or assessment;
- positive action to recruit disabled persons; and/or
- equal opportunities monitoring (which will not form part of the selection or decision-making process).

Where necessary, job offers can be made conditional on a satisfactory medical check.

The Company is required by law to ensure that all employees are entitled to work in the UK. Assumptions about immigration status will not be made based on appearance or apparent nationality. All prospective employees, regardless of nationality, should be required to produce original documents (such as a passport) before employment starts, to satisfy current immigration legislation.

### **Training and Promotion**

Access to training will be fair to give everyone an equal opportunity to progress within the organisation and all promotion decisions will be made on the basis of merit.

## **Termination of employment**

The Company will ensure that redundancy criteria and procedures are fair and objective and are not directly or indirectly discriminatory. The Company will also ensure that disciplinary procedures and penalties are applied without discrimination, whether they result in disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other disciplinary action.

## **Disabilities**

If you are disabled or become disabled, the Company encourages you to tell it about your condition so that it can support you as appropriate.

If you experience difficulties at work because of your disability, you may wish to contact your Manager to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. The Company will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate your needs within reason. If the Company considers a particular adjustment would not be reasonable, it will explain its reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible.

The Company will monitor the physical features of its premises to consider whether they might place anyone with a disability at a substantial disadvantage. Where necessary, the Company will take reasonable steps to improve access.

## **Part-time and fixed-term work**

Part-time and fixed-term employees will be treated in the same way as comparable full-time or permanent staff and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro-rata basis where appropriate), unless different treatment is justified.

## **Breaches of the Policy**

If you believe that you may have been discriminated against you are encouraged to raise the matter in accordance with the Company's Grievance Procedure.

If you believe that you may have been subject to harassment you are encouraged to raise the matter in accordance with the Company's Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy.

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure. Employees who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result.

Any employee who is found to have committed an act of discrimination or harassment will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Company's Disciplinary Procedure. Such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal. The Company takes a strict approach to breaches of this policy.

**ENDS**