



POINT BLANK

MUSIC SCHOOL

Equal Opportunities

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Section A: Introduction

1 PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

- 1.1 The purpose is to set out our commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity in our responsibilities as a limited company and an approved training provider. We fully support the principle of equal opportunities and oppose all unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of ability, age, colour, culture, disability, domestic circumstances, employment status, gender, marital status, nationality, political orientation, racial origin, religious beliefs, sexual orientation and social background. The Company's policies on maternity, paternity, parental and adoption leave are set out at Sections D – G of this handbook.

2 COMMUNICATION OF THE POLICY

- 2.1 All the Companies personnel involved in the management, assessment and quality assurance of programmes, candidates studying programmes and all other employees are made fully aware of the contents of the policy and its purpose.

3 REVIEW OF THE POLICY

- 3.1 The Company reviews the policy annually and may revise it as and when necessary in response to customer feedback, changes in Pearson/Edexcel practices, actions from the regulatory authorities or external agencies or changes in legislation. Our review of the policy will ensure that our procedures continue to be consistent with the regulatory criteria and are applied properly and fairly in arriving at judgements.

Section B: Policy Statement

1 OUR AIMS

1.1 We aim to ensure that equality of opportunity is promoted in access to our products and services and that unlawful or unfair discrimination, whether direct or indirect, is eliminated.

1.2 As a training provider, we'll ensure that:

- This policy is made freely available to our External Contractors and our customers, including candidates.
- The widest possible diversity of candidates can access the content and assessment of our products and services.
- The entry requirements, content and assessment demands of our products and services are appropriate to the knowledge, understanding and skills specified and do not act as unnecessary barriers to achievement.
- All our products and services will ensure fair assessment for all candidates.
- The language we use in our materials is clear, free from bias and appropriate to the target group.
- We aim to produce and endorse material that does not cause offence.
- All our products and services are reviewed against this policy.
- We'll act fairly at all times when working with other centres and candidates.

1.3 As an approved centre, we ensure that:

- All our processes concerned with assessment are carried out in a fair and objective manner.
- We continue to adhere to current equal opportunities legislation.
- We continue to operate an effective equal opportunities policy, with which candidates are familiar and which applies to all candidates using our products and services.
- We continue to operate an effective appeals procedure, with which candidates are familiar and which applies to all candidates using our products and services.

1.4 As an employer, we ensure that:

- There should be no discrimination on account of race, colour, religion or belief, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender, gender reassignment, disability, age, nationality or marital or part-time status.
- The Company will appoint, train, develop, reward and promote on the basis of merit and ability.
- All employees have personal responsibility for the practical application of the Company's equal opportunities policy, which extends to the treatment of job applicants, employees, customers and visitors.
- Special responsibility for the practicable application of the Company's equal opportunities policy falls upon managers, and supervisors involved in the recruitment, selection, promotion and training of employees.

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- The Company's grievance procedure is available to any employee who believes that he or she may have been unfairly discriminated against. The harassment complaints procedure set out in this policy is available to any employee who believes that he or she may have been harassed. Employees will not be victimised in anyway for making such a complaint in good faith. Complaints of this nature will be dealt with seriously, in confidence and as soon as possible.
- Disciplinary action will be taken against any employee who is found to have committed an act of unlawful discrimination. Serious breaches of this policy and serious incidents of harassment will be treated as gross misconduct. Allegations of discrimination which are not made in good faith will also be considered as a disciplinary matter. Confidential records of ongoing matters dealt with in accordance with this policy will be kept.
- In the case of any doubt or concern about the application of this policy in any particular instance, please consult one of the directors.

2 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES CODE OF PRACTICE

- 2.1 The Company has introduced this equal opportunities policy. The Company regards this as a commitment to make full use of the talents and resource of all its employees and to provide a healthy environment which will encourage good and productive working operations within the organisation. This code of practice describes how the policy is to be applied throughout the Company.
- 2.2 The Company is particularly concerned that equality of opportunity is maintained in the following areas:
- recruitment and selection;
 - promotion, transfer and training;
 - terms of employment, benefits, facilities and services;
 - grievances and disciplinary procedures;
 - dismissals and redundancies.
- 2.3 An equal opportunities policy statement will be displayed on the Company notice board and will be contained within the staff handbook.
- 2.4 The Company will ensure that all managers and supervisors with the responsibility for any of the areas of particular concern listed under 'Objectives' above are provided with the appropriate equal opportunities training where necessary.
- 2.5 The directors will regularly monitor the effectiveness of this policy to ensure that it is working in practice and review and update this policy as and when necessary.

3 RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

- 3.1 The following principles should apply whenever recruitment or selection for positions takes place:

- individuals will be assessed according to their personal capability to carry out a given job;
- assumptions that only certain types of person will be able to perform certain types of work must not be made;
- any qualifications or requirements applied to a job which have or may have the effect of inhibiting applications from certain types of person should only be retained if they can be justified in terms of the job to be done;
- recruitment solely or primarily by word of mouth should be avoided if its effect is or may be to prevent certain types of person from applying;
- selection tests should be specifically related to job requirements and should measure the person's actual or inherent ability to do or train for the work;
- selection tests should be reviewed regularly to ensure they remain relevant and free from any unjustifiable bias, either in content or in scoring mechanism;
- applications from different types of person should be processed in the same way;
- written records of interviews and reasons for appointment and non appointment should be kept;
- questions should relate to the requirements of the job; if it is necessary to assess whether personal circumstances may affect job performance, this should be done objectively without questions or assumptions being made which are based on stereotyped beliefs about certain types of person;
- where the Company's arrangements for recruitment and selection put disabled people at a substantial disadvantage due to a reason connected with their disability, reasonable adjustments to the arrangements should be made to eliminate or if that is not reasonably practicable, reduce the disadvantage unless objectively justified;
- no decisions regarding recruitment or selection should be made by a person who has not read and understood this policy.

4 PROMOTION, TRANSFER AND TRAINING

4.1 The following principles should apply to appointments for promotion, transfer and training:

- assessment criteria and appraisal schemes should be carefully examined to ensure that they are not unlawfully discriminatory;
- assessment criteria and appraisal schemes should be monitored and, where such criteria or schemes result in predominantly one group of workers gaining access to promotion, transfer or training, they will be checked to make sure this is not due to any hidden or indirect discrimination;
- promotion and career development patterns will be monitored to ensure that access to promotion and career development opportunities in particular groups of workers are not unjustifiably being excluded;
- traditional qualifications and requirements for promotion, transfer and training, such as length of service, and age, which may discriminate against certain groups of workers shall be reviewed and will only continue to be applied if genuinely justified;
- policies and practices regarding selection for training, day release and personal development should not result in an imbalance in training between groups of workers unless this is objectively justified;

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- where the Company's arrangements in relation to promotion, transfer or training put disabled workers at a substantial disadvantage for a reason connected with their disability, reasonable adjustments to the arrangements should be made to eliminate or, if that is not reasonably practicable, reduce the disadvantage unless objectively justified.

5 TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT, BENEFITS, FACILITIES AND SERVICES

5.1 The following principles shall apply to terms of employment, benefits, facilities and services:

- the terms of employment, benefits, facilities and services available to workers should be reviewed regularly to ensure that they are provided in a way which is free from unlawful discrimination;
- part-time workers should receive pay, benefits, facilities and services on a pro-rata basis to their full-time comparator unless otherwise objectively justified;
- where the Company's arrangements relating to terms of employment, benefits, facilities and services put disabled workers at a substantial disadvantage due to a reason connected with their disability, reasonable adjustments to the arrangements should be made to eliminate or, if that is not reasonably practicable, reduce the disadvantage unless otherwise objectively justified;
- pay and bonus criteria, policies and arrangements should be carefully examined and monitored, and if it appears that any group of workers are disadvantaged by them they will be checked to make sure that this is not due to any hidden or indirect discrimination.

6 GRIEVANCES, DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES, DISMISSALS AND REDUNDANCIES

6.1 Workers who, in good faith, bring a grievance (or assist another to do so) either under this policy or otherwise in relation to an equal opportunities matter will not be disciplined, dismissed or otherwise victimised for having done so.

6.2 Any group of workers will not be disciplined or dismissed for performance or behaviour which would be overlooked or condoned in another group unless there is genuine and lawful justification for this.

6.3 Redundancy criteria and procedures will be carefully examined to ensure that they do not operate in an unlawfully discriminatory manner.

6.4 The provision of voluntary redundancy benefits will be equally available to all workers concerned unless there is a genuine and lawful justification for doing so otherwise.