

Equality Diversity and Inclusion Charter and Policy

Ambition Institute's charter

At Ambition Institute, we are dedicated to working towards our goal of an organisation one where equality, diversity and inclusion are at the heart of everything we do. Whether you are a member of staff, a participant on our programme or a supplier we work with, we want to ensure each and every interaction is one where you are treated with dignity and respect.

Our charter sets out our vision for how Ambition Institute can become a truly equal, diverse and inclusive organisation – to both work at – and work with.

Below we have set out our commitments to help us deliver this vision:

1. **Work for the team:** We know diversity of thought and lived experiences makes us a stronger team so we will endeavour to recruit both internally and through our programmes a cohort that is reflective of the diversity of British society
2. **Own your role:** We encourage all employees and participants to be authentic to their own identities and encourage the sharing of knowledge and experiences on individual, team and organisational levels.
3. **Keep getting better:** We will continually look at examples of best practice and evaluate our organisational processes – both internally and externally.

We will deliver on these commitments by taking on the following approaches:

Getting the basics right

To ensure we have the basic building blocks securely in place as the foundation of our work, we will:

- > Appoint an executive sponsor for equality, diversity and inclusion
- > Capture appropriate data, commit to targets, and publicise progress
- > Commit at Board and Executive level to zero tolerance of harassment and bullying
- > Make clear that supporting EDI in the workplace is the responsibility of all managers
- > Take action that supports the career progression of under-represented groups

Building the best team

Attracting the best talent is vital for us to achieve our mission. In order to do this we will:

- > Ensure our attraction, recruitment, selection practices are inclusive
- > Take practical steps to increase objectivity during the selection process, such as anonymised application forms and targeted quality assurance
- > Make Unconscious Bias training mandatory for all staff at Ambition Institute

Laying strong foundations

Once we have attracted the best talent, we will work hard to retain them by:

- > Promoting flexible and agile working processes to support staff
- > Ensure our technology supports remote working
- > Engender a culture of inclusivity at all levels

Scaffolding the framework for success

To support retention, we will provide ongoing development to staff model. We will ensure we promote:

- > A suite of relevant and thought-leading CPD for staff, and equal access to stretch opportunities
- > Intersectional, self-managed teams who support each other to solve problems
- > EDI champions and committed allies at every level of the organisation

Working towards embedding this approach in our programmes

We are working towards rolling these principles out consistently across all our programmes. For example, this is already seen in our apprenticeship programme, where equality and diversity is continually embedded in our provision. We do this through: apprentice induction, which provides a general overview of equality and diversity, introducing them to the policy and topic; development of an Individual Learning Programme (ILP), ensuring all apprentices have an ILP that meets their learning needs and ensures full participation; encouraging apprentices to explore equality and diversity issues and how it can impact them and others personally and professionally.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

1. Introduction

1.1. Ambition Institute is committed to promoting a working environment underpinned by fairness to all individuals, where equality and diversity is recognised, encouraged and valued, and where the concept of individual responsibility is accepted by all.

1.2. We of course honour our legal obligations. The Equality Act (2010), makes it illegal to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment or employment on grounds of sex, gender history or gender reassignment, pregnancy, age, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin / caste, sexual orientation, religion or belief, or because someone is on maternity leave, married or is a civil partner. It is also unlawful to discriminate unjustifiably on grounds of disability or to fail to make reasonable adjustments to overcome barriers to employment caused by disability. These are known as protected characteristics.

1.3. We go beyond the legal requirement and believe equality, diversity and inclusion to be central to our values. Our organisational commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion is set out in our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion charter. By signing up to the Charter, we are making a statement of the values we share and the culture we support. This will be a visible commitment, accessible to all stakeholders of the organisation.

2. Purpose

2.1. Ambition Institute is committed to eliminating discrimination and encouraging diversity within our workforce. We want our workforce to be representative of society with each individual feeling respected and able to give of their best. To that end, the purpose of this policy is to provide equality and fairness for all those within our employment and who are externally associated with us. We want to ensure that we do not discriminate on any of the protected characteristics. We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.

2.2. This policy underpins our Charter and promotes an inclusive culture and working environment where:

- > The diversity of all employees is respected and valued
- > All employees have the opportunity to receive fair treatment in an environment free from discrimination and harassment
- > Opportunities for promotion, training, and continued employment and development are provided to all staff based on evidence-based merit in relation to the role criteria. No employee or job applicant shall be disadvantaged by requirements that cannot be shown to be relevant to the job they applied for or hold
- > All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation

3. Scope

3.1. This policy and procedure applies to all employees of Ambition Institute and where applicable also our external partners, participants and those who engage with us during our recruitment process.

3.2. This policy applies to all aspects of the employment life cycle, including but not limited to advertising vacancies, recruitment, terms and conditions of employment, career development, training, promotion, performance management, grievance and disciplinary procedures and termination of employment.

4. Responsibilities

4.1. Ambition Institute is responsible for maintaining fair, consistent and objective procedures for matters relating to equality, diversity and inclusion of all its stakeholders and ensuring that employees are appropriately trained within this area.

4.2. The People Director has overall direct responsibility for the internal organisation, control and management of the policy at Ambition Institute. This includes responsibility for the collation and retention of the records necessary to enable the organisation to have in place an effective monitoring system.

4.3. The members of the Executive Committee have responsibility for the internal organisation, control and management of their area of responsibility.

4.4. Managers are responsible for:

- > Co-operating with any measures introduced by Ambition Institute in relation to equal opportunities

- > Managing their direct reports in a way which is consistent with this policy
- > Being champions for this policy and overall good behaviour
- > Setting a good example and ensuring all employees understand the standards expected from them
- > Following agreed procedures
- > Dealing firmly with breaches in accordance with Ambition Institute’s Disciplinary Policy
- > Working with the HR / People team to ensure that all legislation is properly adhered to

4.5. All employees are responsible for:

- > Co-operating with any measures introduced by Ambition Institute in relation to equal opportunities
- > Treating colleagues and others (including participants, visitors, contractors etc) with respect and in ways which are consistent with this policy
- > Challenging and reporting breaches
- > Championing this policy in line with our values

4.6. HR is responsible for:

- > Ensuring that this policy and other policies relating to this policy are updated as and when necessary
- > Ensuring that the organisation’s employment practices are monitored and updated when necessary
- > Treating all applicants and employees with respect and fairness when either applying for a new job, a new role or with regards to learning and development opportunities or reward and recognition decisions
- > Ensuring that this policy and our diversity charter is championed and used successfully by all employees
- > Ensuring that the necessary process is adhered to if this policy is in any way breached

It is recognised that whilst much can be achieved by legislative measures, real progress in improving equality of opportunity in employment can only be achieved with a continuing commitment, in all disciplines and at all levels of employees, and through training that reflects and supports equal opportunities throughout the organisation.

5. Monitoring of Equal Opportunities

5.1. All personnel procedures and conditions of service will be reviewed on a regular basis, to identify and eliminate processes, practices or eligibility criteria which may discriminate (directly or indirectly) against any particular group(s) or categories of employees.

Job applicants will be asked for monitoring data on a sheet that can be detached from the application form so that it can be tracked on an anonymous basis. Monitoring data will be kept separate from the selection process. Job applicants will be informed that the monitoring data will only be used for equality monitoring and not for shortlisting or to be sent to hiring managers.

5.2. All information collected will remain strictly confidential. Personnel records will be kept in a format which enables analysis to be made of the numbers of job applicants, appointments and employees in various categories, including:

- > Age
- > Disability (*mental and physical*)
- > gender identity
- > marriage or civil partnership
- > pregnancy and maternity
- > race (ethnicity / nationality)
- > religion or belief
- > sex
- > sexual orientation.

These are known as protected characteristics

5.3. By monitoring the various areas above Ambition Institute can evaluate whether current recruitment, promotion, training and general employment practices are reaching and protecting the full range of possible candidates and help to guard employees against any potential for discrimination.

6. Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment

6.1. Ambition Institute will not tolerate any form of discrimination or harassment, by or against employees. More details on how we hold to account on this can be found in the Disciplinary Policy.

Direct Discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably on the grounds of their protected characteristic(s) and potentially amongst other things, for example:

- > Rejecting a job applicant from a particular racial group or gender because it is felt they might not fit in or they may be unreliable
- > Offering overtime to a single person rather than a married person of the same sex on the grounds of marital status

Indirect Discrimination occurs when an unjustifiable requirement, condition or practice is applied which, in theory, applies to everyone but which in practice has a disproportionately adverse effect on one particular group. For example:

- > Setting a very high standard of English for a vacancy, when it is likely that English is not the first language of some candidates
- > Not allowing the wearing of turbans or headscarves
- > Communicating a policy that indirectly excludes some members of staff

This type of discrimination is unlawful unless there is a Genuine Occupational Qualification, i.e. it can be justified on the grounds of business need. Ambition Institute will endeavor to have a flexible approach to working hours and conditions so that those with disabilities, family commitments, religious observance requirements etc. can be accommodated as far as possible within the needs of the business.

Discrimination by way of the following is also unlawful:

Victimisation: Where a person is treated less favourably than another because he or she has taken some kind of action under the anti-discrimination, health and safety, whistleblowing or other relevant employment legislation, e.g. they have made allegations or brought proceedings or been involved in such action.

Harassment & Bullying: Any form of harassment or bullying related to race, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, religion or belief, in person or via any other means (e.g. harassment online via social media platforms) is unlawful. This can include unacceptable behaviour such as unwanted physical contact, verbal inferences, inappropriate gestures, openly insulting behaviour or comments, inappropriate use of electronic and technical communication methods, devices and platforms etc.

Segregation: It is unacceptable to segregate anyone on the grounds of race, gender, age, disability, religion or belief or sexual orientation except where objectively justifiable, for example in the provision of separate male and female toilet facilities.

Unequal pay: It is unlawful for an individual to be treated less favourably than a person of the opposite sex (and any other protected characters where relevant) as regards pay and other terms of the employment contract, where they are employed on the same work or work which is broadly similar or of equal value.

Discrimination by Association: Is when someone is treated unfavourably on the basis of another person's protected characteristic that they are associated with. For example, a candidate who has been told she is getting a job is suddenly deselected after revealing she has a severely disabled child with complicated care arrangements. The withdrawal of the job offer could amount to discrimination because of her association with a disabled person (disability being a protected characteristic).

Discrimination by association doesn't apply to all protected characteristics. Marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity are not covered by the legislation. Nor does it apply to instances of indirect discrimination by association - it has to be direct.

Discrimination by Perception: is when someone is treated unfavourably because others believe they have a protected characteristic, even though in reality they don't have it, it is perceptive discrimination. A possible example of this is an employee who is rejected for promotion to a supermarket buying team that sources wines, because he has an Arabic name. The employer has assumed that he is a Muslim and won't want to deal with alcohol.

This could be considered discrimination by perception, whether or not the employee is a Muslim. As with associative discrimination, perceptive discrimination does not apply to marriage and civil partnership, nor pregnancy and maternity, and it must be direct discrimination.

Third Party Harassment: Is when an employee experiences harassment from our third parties, such as our participants, external stakeholders, partner companies, coaches, facilitators, external mentors etc. and it is our duty to protect our employees in such cases.

Likewise, it is unlawful to comply with discriminatory instructions, or to instruct or put pressure on another person to discriminate or to assist in an act of discrimination.

7. Our External Assessment Process

7.1. We have developed specific guidelines for our Selection and Assessment processes as it is crucial for us to maintain processes that enable opportunity for all.

Along with an updated CV and supporting statement, external candidates are asked to complete an equal opportunities monitoring form for all roles, but this is kept apart from the CV and supporting statement. Any data is protected under the General Data Protection Regulation (2018).

We may at times be willing to take positive action during our recruitment processes. Positive action is where steps are taken to help or encourage people with different needs, in accordance with the protected characteristics. Examples include making reasonable adjustments to the recruitment process for the candidate.

NB. The Equality Act defines disability as ‘a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’, however we will also provide adjustments for other circumstances in which a candidate does not have a recognised disability but may be disadvantaged during the process (e.g. broken limb), as long as this does not have an effect on our overall recruitment process or programme requirements.

An important part of remaining fair and non-discriminatory is the use of reasonable adjustments. A reasonable adjustment is defined as ‘a specific change (or changes) to the delivery or presentation of the centre, designed to ensure that the candidate is not unfairly disadvantaged due to their disability or condition.’

It is important to clarify that positive action and reasonable adjustments are not the same as positive discrimination, which would be favouring individuals of certain characteristics at the point of selection. Under the Equality Act this would be unlawful, and we do not practice this at our Centres. All individuals are judged based on their performance at the Centre against our Competency Framework and we do not have any quotas for success rates.

8. Remedies - Complaints Procedure

Ambition Institute welcomes feedback on its various processes and policies. We also encourage and expect staff to champion our policies and best practice. However, where issues cannot be resolved informally, the grievance procedure is the recommended course of action for any employee who believes that he or she may have been unfairly treated.

Staff should feel able to raise such issues without being penalised (unless the allegation is untrue and made maliciously.) Any such complaints will be taken seriously and investigated. Confidentiality will be observed as far as possible, although in some cases complete confidentiality may restrict the investigation process and solution.

9. Breach of Policy

Any behaviour in breach of this policy will be regarded as misconduct and possibly even gross misconduct where relevant and will be dealt with through the disciplinary procedure. Repeated or particularly serious

breaches are defined as gross misconduct and may lead to summary dismissal. Failure on the part of managers, HR or leadership to take appropriate action, or breaching of confidentiality, are also considered acts of misconduct / gross misconduct.