

Equality and Diversity Policy

V2.0

Introduction

This is version two of the Equal Opportunities Policy (Renamed as Equality and Diversity Policy) and replaces all previous versions. This document is subject to regular revision and maintained electronically by its owner. Electronic copies are version controlled. Printed copies are not subject to this control.

Date	Section	Change	Reviewed by
January 2023	All	Reviewed	R Lowbridge

Change history (V1.0 Equality Opportunities)

Section	Change
All	Re name and re write

Scope

SFEDI Awards is an equal opportunities employer. The company is committed to the development of policies to provide for equality of opportunity in all aspects of employment and service delivery.

This policy provides a definition of equality and diversity, examples of equality and diversity in practice, and describes the process and standards required from SFEDI Awards Centres in line with the Equality Act 2010.

SFEDI Awards will take whatever steps are necessary including, if appropriate, use of disciplinary mechanisms and sanctions procedures, to enforce this policy. In addition, any employee, director, member, volunteer, or trainee who considers that he or she is suffering from unequal treatment on any grounds may implement the grievance procedure. Any Centre or learner who feels they are being treated unfairly may implement the Complaints or Appeals Policy.

We expect all Centres within our approved network to have in place and operate under an embedded equal opportunities policy and practices to ensure that both their staff and customers are not discriminated against on any grounds.

Definition

“The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society.” www.gov.uk

Equal Opportunities Statement

SFEDI Awards wishes to secure genuine equality of opportunity whether required by legislation or not, in all aspects of its activities as an employer and service provider including those services regulated by Government.

To this end, we will take every reasonable and practicable step to ensure that there is no discrimination against any individual or individuals and where it is reasonable to do so will take steps to address identified inequalities or barriers that may arise between: people of different religious beliefs, staff, directors, beneficiaries, trainees, learners, disabled and non-disabled people, people of different sexual orientation, people of different political opinion, those with and without dependants, age, marital status, service users, regardless of gender, marital status, race, financial circumstance or other criteria.

Overall responsibility for the Equality and Diversity Policy within SFEDI Awards lies with the Chief Operating Officer for ensuring that the Policy is implemented in all areas of responsibility.

Examples of implementation of this policy

SFEDI Awards will:

- Not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment, or victimisation on any grounds
- Provide appropriate, sensitive, and accessible services to everyone
- Work with stakeholders to eradicate prejudice, discrimination, harassment, and negative stereotyping
- Make reasonable adjustments for disabled learners and staff to ensure fair access to services and opportunities
- Incorporate appropriate responsibilities and duties in respect of implementing this policy into job descriptions and work objectives of staff
- Provide equality training and guidance to our staff and contractors as appropriate
- Communicate, as appropriate, this policy to employees and all those associated with the services provided by SFEDI Awards in particular our Centres
- Ensure that all members of staff and contractors involved in any aspect of our qualification development and delivery arrangements to comply with this policy. In particular, that they ensure there are no barriers to entry to units and qualifications it develops and delivers and/or offers.
- Make every practical effort to ensure that materials, services, and facilities are not only free from bias, but will also support employees, contractors, approved Centres and learners in maximising employment and personal development opportunities.

SFEDI Awards Process

SFEDI Awards Staff and contractors

SFEDI Awards commits to incorporating specific and appropriate duties in respect of implementing this Equality and Diversity Policy into job descriptions and work objectives of all staff. We will provide equality and diversity training and guidance as appropriate to our employees and contractors. This training will be included as part of induction training, as well as further ongoing personal development, as identified via our internal performance review arrangements.

Equality and Diversity checks

To ensure that commitment to Equality and Diversity is carried out, SFEDI Awards checks all drafts of its work and takes all reasonable steps to ensure that they:

- Are written in clear, straightforward language so that they can be understood by people regardless of their level of education or fluency with English
- Comply with current equalities legislation and practice
- Are accessible to all people regardless of their circumstances as listed throughout this document

The above points are represented within SFEDI Awards' equality check which includes points to check that SFEDI Awards' work does not discriminate against small businesses who often find learning solutions difficult to access due to funding, language, format, or structure.

Development of Assessments

Where there are existing assessment methods, we check that they offer equality of access to all without discriminating against any groups or individuals who share a particular characteristic or barriers to entry.

The process of designing of assessments will include identifying and precluding any unjustifiable barriers in the assessment of qualifications and units that might prevent learners who share protected characteristics from demonstrating their knowledge, understanding or skills. This includes learners with physical disabilities.

When designing assessment methods for individual units or groups of units, we consult with interested centre representatives to make sure that the proposals are inclusive and offer equality of access to potential learners. This happens during the qualification development process where centre representatives are part of the development process and by collecting feedback from centre representatives on draft assessment methods.

Assessments are further reviewed during the qualification review process to ensure that, where potential barriers have been identified during delivery then they are examined and addressed using reasonable steps to ensure fair access for all.

External Quality Assurance

External Quality Assurers (EQAs) and other SFEDI Awards staff periodically check that a Centre's Equality and Diversity Policy is fit for purpose and runs through all their internal procedures relating to the recruitment, preparation, and assessment of learners. This evidence must be made available to SFEDI Awards upon request.

Monitoring

SFEDI Awards will comply with all current and relevant legislation which includes, but is not limited to, the Equality Act 2010.

As part of the monitoring of learners registering for SFEDI Award's qualifications we will collect information on diversity, requests for special considerations, access arrangements and feedback from learners, centres, and other stakeholders.

All relevant issues identified that suggests our provision or services may have unnecessarily impacted on learners will be reported back to the Chief Operating Officer who will be responsible for leading on introducing amendments to provision and/or services where necessary and in accordance with our internal procedures for developing and reviewing units and qualifications. Details of the outcomes of each review will be made available to the qualification regulators upon request.

Centre Responsibilities

SFEDI Awards expects its approved Centres to enable learners to have equal access to training and assessment, irrespective of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

As part of the SFEDI Awards approval process Centres are required to have in place their own Equality and Diversity Policy. This policy should be followed prior to referring to SFEDI Awards for further guidance. We require all approved Centres to apply standards to be compliant with the Equality Act 2010. The policy should extend beyond reference to internal matters (such as employment) and include activities specifically in relation to learners and customers.

The Centre policy should apply to all assessment sites and there should be arrangements in place to monitor its application and effectiveness. Throughout this process, Centres must comply with Data Protection Law and Regulations.

It is important that any Centre staff or contractors involved in the delivery of SFEDI qualifications and that learners registered for SFEDI Awards qualifications are fully aware of the contents of the policy.

Appeals

Where complaints relating to issues of inequality cannot be satisfactorily resolved by the Centre, learners must be made aware of their right to appeal to SFEDI Awards via the arrangements outlined in our Appeals Policy.

Regulation

SFEDI Awards monitors qualifications which it makes available for any feature which could disadvantage a group of learners or a particular learner who share a particular characteristic. Where such a feature is identified we will remove any disadvantage which is not justifiable and maintain records of any disadvantage which we believe to be justifiable, setting our reasons why, in our opinion the disadvantage is justifiable.

Any relevant issues identified that suggest that SFEDI Award's provision or services may have unnecessarily impacted on learners will be reported to SFEDI Awards Board members. They are responsible for ensuring that an appropriate staff member introduces, as appropriate, amendments to provision and/or services where necessary and in accordance with SFEDI Awards procedures for developing and reviewing units and qualifications. Details of ongoing reviews will be made available to the qualification regulators upon request.

Review Arrangements

We will review this policy as part of our annual self-evaluation arrangements and revise it as and when necessary in response to customer and learner feedback, changes in our practices, actions from the regulatory authorities or external agencies, changes in legislation, or trends identified from previous allegations.

In addition, this policy may be updated considering operational feedback to ensure our arrangements for dealing with Equal Opportunities remain effective.

If you would like to feedback any views, please contact us via the details provided at the end of this policy

Other Related SFEDI Policies and Documents

- Access Arrangements
- Appeals Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Grievance Procedure
- Reasonable Adjustments Policy
- Sanctions Policy
- Special Considerations Policy

Contact Us

If you have any queries about the content of this policy, please contact our customer service department.

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