

# Equality and Diversity Policy



Higher Education Design Quality Forum

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy sets out HEDQF approach to equality and diversity. HEDQF is committed to promoting equality and diversity and promoting a culture that actively values difference and recognises that people from different backgrounds and experiences can bring valuable insights and enhance the way we work.
- 1.2 HEDQF aims to be an inclusive organisation, committed to providing equal opportunities throughout the organisation and through engagement from the work and research that we undertake.

## 2. Equality and diversity at HEDQF

- 2.1 We consider that equality means breaking down barriers, eliminating discrimination and ensuring equal opportunities and access for all groups.
- 2.2 We consider diversity to mean celebrating difference and valuing everyone. Each person is an individual with visible and non-visible differences and by respecting this everyone can feel valued for their contributions which is beneficial not only for the individual but for HEDQF too.
- 2.3 We acknowledge that equality and diversity are not inter-changeable but inter-dependent. There can be no equality of opportunity if difference is not valued and harnessed.

## 3. Scope

- 3.1 The rights and obligations set out in this policy apply equally to all Trustees and members.
- 3.2 Each Trustee and Associate has personal responsibility for the application of this policy. As part of the induction of all Trustees and Associate, they are expected to read and familiarise themselves with this policy, ensure that this policy is properly observed and fully complied with and to complete the declaration below.

## 4. HEDQF's commitment

- 4.1 Every Trustee and Associate is entitled to an environment that promotes dignity, equality and respect for all. HEDQF will not tolerate any acts of unlawful or unfair discrimination (including harassment) committed against any Trustee, Associate or others with whom we engage because of a protected characteristic:
  - sex;
  - gender reassignment;
  - marriage and civil partnership;
  - pregnancy and maternity;
  - race (including ethnic origin, colour, nationality and national origin);
  - disability;
  - sexual orientation;
  - religion and or belief; and
  - age.
- 4.2 No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated. If you believe that you may have suffered discrimination because of any of the above protected characteristics, you should consider the appropriateness and feasibility of attempted informal resolution by discussion in the first instance with a member of the HEDQF Executive Group.
- 4.3 Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the appropriate procedure. HEDQF will ensure that individuals who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably by HEDQF as a result. However, false allegations of a breach of this policy which

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are found to have been made in bad faith will be dealt with under HEDQF's Discipline Policy.

- 4.4 A person found to have breached this policy may be subject to disciplinary action under HEDQF's Discipline Policy.
- 4.5 Trustees and Associates may also be personally liable for any acts of discrimination prohibited by this policy that they commit, meaning that they can be sued by the victim.

## 5. Types of discrimination

- 5.1 There are various types of discrimination prohibited by this policy. The main types are:

### Direct Discrimination

- 5.2 Direct discrimination occurs where one person is treated less favourably than another because of a protected characteristic set out in this policy. Other types of direct discrimination are:

- 5.2.1 Associative discrimination - this is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.
- 5.2.2 Perceptive discrimination - this is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic.

### Indirect discrimination

- 5.3 Indirect discrimination occurs when an unjustifiable requirement or condition is applied, which appears to be the same for all, but which has a disproportionate, adverse effect on one group of people. This is discrimination even though there was no intention to discriminate.

### Harassment

- 5.4 Harassment is "unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual." It is important to remember that it is not the intention of the harasser but how the recipient perceives their behaviour, which determines whether harassment has occurred.