



UK COLLEGE OF IT LTD.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION POLICY

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Version	2.0
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Review cycle	At least annually and following significant legal, regulatory, operational or organisational change
Policy owner	Senior Management / Quality Assurance
Applies to	Learners, applicants, graduates, tutors, employees, contractors, partners, visitors and other persons engaging with UK College of IT

1. Purpose and Commitment

UK College of IT Ltd. (“UK College of IT”, “the College”, “we”, “us” or “our”) is committed to providing an inclusive learning and working environment in which people are treated with dignity, fairness and respect.

The College believes that diversity strengthens learning, professional development and the exchange of ideas. We aim to create an environment in which learners and staff can participate fully and are not unfairly disadvantaged because of personal characteristics or circumstances.

This Policy establishes the College’s approach to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), identifies unacceptable conduct, explains responsibilities and provides a framework for preventing discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

2. Legal and Regulatory Framework

This Policy is informed by the Equality Act 2010 and applicable UK equality principles.

The Equality Act protects people from discrimination, harassment and victimisation in a range of contexts, including education and the provision of services. The nine protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The precise legal duties applicable to an organisation depend on the activity, jurisdiction, relationship and circumstances. This Policy therefore does not claim that every statutory duty applies to every College activity in exactly the same way.

Where mandatory legal requirements provide a higher standard than this Policy, the legal requirement takes precedence.

3. Scope

This Policy applies to:

- applicants and prospective learners;
- current learners;
- graduates and former learners where relevant;
- employees and managers;
- tutors, assessors and academic staff;
- contractors and consultants;
- partner organisations and representatives acting on behalf of the College;
- visitors and participants in College activities; and
- persons interacting with College services where the relevant equality obligations apply.

4. EDI Principles

The College's EDI approach is based on the following principles:

- dignity and respect;
- equal opportunity;
- fair and transparent decision-making;
- inclusion and participation;
- prevention of discrimination and harassment;
- reasonable adjustments and accessibility;
- proportionality and consistency;
- respect for different backgrounds and perspectives; and
- continuous improvement based on evidence and feedback.

5. Protected Characteristics

The College recognises the nine protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex; and
- sexual orientation.

The College will also seek to prevent unfair treatment based on other personal circumstances or characteristics where such treatment is inappropriate, subject to applicable law and legitimate programme or professional requirements.

6. Direct Discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs where a person is treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic or another legally protected basis.

The College will not make admissions, assessment, employment, learner-support or service decisions on an unlawfully discriminatory basis.

7. Indirect Discrimination

An apparently neutral policy, requirement or practice may create a particular disadvantage for people sharing a protected characteristic.

The College will seek to identify and review such barriers and, where required by law and reasonably practicable, take appropriate steps to prevent unlawful indirect discrimination.

8. Disability and Reasonable Adjustments

The College recognises its responsibilities regarding disabled learners and seeks to remove or reduce avoidable barriers to participation.

Where applicable, reasonable adjustments may include changes to assessment arrangements, additional support, accessible formats, assistive technology, communication arrangements or other appropriate measures.

UK government guidance confirms that education providers have duties concerning reasonable adjustments for disabled students, including changes to assessment and additional support or aids.

Adjustments should be considered individually. Different learners with the same disability may require different adjustments, and the same learner may require different arrangements for different activities or assessments.

Adjustments must not normally compromise an essential learning outcome or the validity of an assessment unless the applicable academic or awarding framework permits the change.

9. Accessibility and Digital Inclusion

Equality and inclusion extend to digital learning.

The College aims to provide accessible websites, learning materials and digital services and maintains a separate Accessibility Statement.

Where a third-party platform creates an accessibility barrier, the College will consider reasonable alternatives, adjustments or workarounds where practicable.

10. Pregnancy and Maternity

The College will seek to ensure that pregnancy, maternity and related circumstances do not result in unlawful discrimination or unfair academic or administrative treatment.

Where pregnancy, maternity or related circumstances affect participation or assessment, the College may consider reasonable adjustments, extensions, alternative arrangements or special consideration in accordance with applicable procedures.

11. Religion or Belief

The College respects lawful religious and philosophical beliefs.

Where reasonably practicable, the College will consider relevant learner needs, including reasonable adjustments to participation, scheduling or assessment arrangements where appropriate and consistent with academic requirements.

Respect for religion or belief does not require the College to permit conduct that is discriminatory, threatening, harassing or otherwise contrary to law or College policy.

12. Race, Ethnicity and Nationality

The College is committed to preventing racism, racial harassment and unfair treatment based on race, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origin.

Learning and professional environments should encourage respectful interaction between people from different backgrounds.

13. Sex and Gender-Related Equality

The College is committed to lawful equality and respectful treatment in relation to sex and gender-related matters.

Where legal requirements or programme-specific rules require distinctions based on sex or another protected characteristic, the College will apply those requirements carefully and proportionately.

The legal and policy framework concerning sex and gender reassignment continues to develop. The College will review this Policy when material legal or regulatory guidance changes. Current EHRC materials identify sex and gender reassignment among the protected characteristics under the Equality Act.

14. Marriage and Civil Partnership

The College will not unlawfully discriminate against a person because they are married or in a civil partnership in contexts where this characteristic is protected.

15. Sexual Orientation

The College will not unlawfully discriminate, harass or victimise a person because of sexual orientation.

All learners and staff are expected to communicate respectfully and professionally.

16. Age Equality

The College will seek to prevent unlawful age discrimination.

Age may be relevant to a programme where a genuine legal, safeguarding, professional or qualification requirement applies. Any such requirement should be objectively justified or otherwise lawful.

17. Gender Reassignment

The College will not tolerate unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation relating to gender reassignment.

Personal information concerning an individual's gender identity or related circumstances will be handled sensitively and in accordance with applicable privacy requirements.

18. Harassment

Harassment is unacceptable.

Examples may include unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Harassment may occur in person or through digital communication, including email, messaging, online classrooms, discussion forums and social-media interactions connected with College activities.

19. Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is prohibited.

Sexual comments, unwanted sexual attention, inappropriate messages, images, jokes, propositions or other unwanted sexual conduct may constitute harassment depending on the circumstances.

The College will treat allegations seriously and may apply safeguarding, disciplinary or complaints procedures where appropriate.

20. Victimisation

Victimisation is prohibited.

A person should not be treated unfairly because they have made or supported a complaint concerning discrimination, participated in an investigation, or undertaken another legally protected act.

21. Bullying and Respectful Behaviour

Bullying may not always fall within the legal definition of harassment but is inconsistent with the College's standards.

Repeated intimidation, humiliation, exclusion, abusive communication or misuse of power may be addressed under the Learner Code of Conduct, staff procedures, Complaints Policy or other applicable process.

22. Online Conduct

The same equality and respect standards apply to online learning environments as to physical environments.

Unacceptable online behaviour may include discriminatory comments, harassment, exclusion, offensive usernames, abusive private messages, discriminatory images or deliberate targeting of another learner.

23. Admissions and Recruitment

Admission and recruitment decisions should be based on published, relevant and proportionate criteria.

The College will seek to ensure that applicants are not unlawfully discriminated against in application, selection or enrolment processes.

Where an applicant requires an accessibility adjustment, the College will consider an appropriate reasonable adjustment where applicable.

24. Teaching and Learning

Tutors should create learning environments that encourage participation and respectful discussion.

Teaching materials and examples should be selected with reasonable consideration of diversity and accessibility.

Academic freedom and legitimate educational discussion remain important, but they do not provide a licence for unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

25. Assessment and Progression

Assessment decisions should be based on published learning outcomes and criteria.

Personal characteristics should not influence marking except where a lawful and academically relevant requirement applies.

Reasonable adjustments should be implemented where approved, in accordance with the Assessment & Appeals Policy and Accessibility Statement.

26. Learner Support

Learner support should be available fairly and without unlawful discrimination.

Where individual needs differ, providing different support may be appropriate to achieve equitable participation.

The College may signpost learners to external specialist services where a need falls outside the College's role.

27. Positive Action

Where lawful, the College may consider positive action to address disadvantage, meet particular needs or improve participation where a protected group is underrepresented.

Any positive action will be designed and implemented consistently with applicable equality law. EHRC guidance explains that positive action can be used in appropriate circumstances to address disadvantage, meet different needs or facilitate participation.

28. Diversity and Inclusive Culture

The College seeks to value differences in background, experience, perspective and professional practice.

Inclusion does not require agreement on every issue. It requires that differences can be discussed respectfully and that people are not unfairly excluded or targeted.

29. Freedom of Expression and Respectful Academic Discussion

The College supports appropriate academic discussion, critical thinking and respectful disagreement.

Academic discussion should be conducted in accordance with the law and College policies. The existence of disagreement does not by itself constitute discrimination or harassment, but discriminatory or harassing conduct may be addressed where the relevant legal or policy threshold is met.

30. Confidentiality and Privacy

Information relating to equality concerns, disabilities, reasonable adjustments, complaints or allegations may include personal or sensitive information.

Such information will be handled in accordance with the College's Privacy Policy and applicable data-protection requirements.

Information should be shared only where necessary to provide support, investigate a concern, safeguard individuals, comply with law or administer a relevant process.

31. Reporting an EDI Concern

Concerns may be raised through the Complaints Policy or directly with the designated EDI contact.

Reports should, where possible, identify the issue, relevant dates, persons involved and any supporting evidence.

A person does not need to prove a legal breach before raising a concern.

32. Complaints and Investigation

Complaints concerning discrimination, harassment or victimisation will normally be handled under the Complaints Policy unless another specialist procedure applies.

Investigations should be fair, proportionate and impartial. Where practicable, a person directly involved in the alleged incident should not be responsible for determining the complaint.

33. Safeguarding and Serious Concerns

Some equality-related concerns may also constitute safeguarding concerns, particularly where there is abuse, exploitation, threats, coercion or serious risk of harm.

Where safeguarding is engaged, the Safeguarding Policy will apply and information may need to be escalated to appropriate personnel or competent authorities.

34. No Retaliation

No learner, staff member or other person should be disadvantaged for raising an equality concern or participating honestly in an investigation.

Knowingly making a false or malicious allegation may be addressed under the relevant conduct procedure, but a complaint that is not substantiated will not automatically be treated as malicious.

35. Staff and Tutor Responsibilities

Staff and tutors are expected to:

- treat learners and colleagues fairly and respectfully;
- avoid discriminatory, harassing or victimising conduct;
- understand the College's EDI expectations;
- consider accessibility and reasonable adjustments;
- respond appropriately when concerns are raised;
- maintain appropriate confidentiality; and
- escalate serious or safeguarding concerns.

36. Learner Responsibilities

Learners are expected to:

- treat others with dignity and respect;
- avoid discriminatory or harassing conduct;
- respect differences in background and belief;
- use online learning systems responsibly;
- comply with the Learner Code of Conduct; and
- raise serious concerns through appropriate channels.

37. Training and Awareness

The College should provide appropriate EDI awareness and training to relevant staff and tutors.

Training may cover equality law, unconscious bias, respectful communication, accessibility, reasonable adjustments, harassment, safeguarding and appropriate escalation.

38. Monitoring and Equality Data

Where lawful and proportionate, the College may review relevant equality-related information to identify participation barriers, learner experience issues or recurring concerns.

Any equality monitoring should follow data-protection principles and should not collect personal information unnecessarily.

Equality data should be used for improvement and quality assurance rather than unfairly disadvantaging individuals.

39. Equality Impact Considerations

When developing or materially changing policies, programmes or learner-facing processes, the College may consider whether the change could create barriers or disproportionate disadvantages for particular groups.

Where a potential barrier is identified, the College should consider reasonable mitigation.

40. Procurement and Partners

Where appropriate, the College should consider equality, accessibility and inclusive service delivery when selecting significant external suppliers or partners.

Contracts or partnership arrangements may include relevant expectations concerning lawful conduct, learner treatment, accessibility and safeguarding.

41. Monitoring Complaints and Incidents

Equality-related complaints, reasonable-adjustment issues and relevant incidents may be monitored in aggregate as part of quality assurance.

Recurring issues should be considered for corrective or preventive action.

42. Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement

EDI is part of the College's wider Quality Assurance framework.

Quality reviews may consider learner feedback, complaints, participation, accessibility barriers, staff training and other relevant evidence.

Where a material issue is identified, the College may create an action plan with a responsible person and target date.

43. Breaches of this Policy

Breaches may be addressed through the Complaints Policy, Learner Code of Conduct, disciplinary procedures, safeguarding procedures or another appropriate process.

Possible outcomes depend on the seriousness and circumstances and may include education, guidance, warning, corrective action, restrictions, disciplinary measures or termination of a relevant relationship where lawful and proportionate.

44. Policy Review

This Policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner where there are material changes to equality law, regulatory guidance, programme delivery, learner demographics or College operations.

The College will monitor relevant UK equality guidance because legal and policy interpretation can develop over time.

45. Contact

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion: info@ukcollegeofit.uk

Learner Support: info@ukcollegeofit.uk

Complaints: info@ukcollegeofit.uk

Quality Assurance: info@ukcollegeofit.uk

General Enquiries: info@ukcollegeofit.uk

Appendix A – EDI Concern / Incident Record

Case reference: _____

Date received: _____

Person raising concern: _____

Learner / staff member affected: _____

Programme / department: _____

Nature of concern: _____

Protected characteristic potentially relevant: _____

Description: _____

Evidence provided: _____

Immediate risk / safeguarding issue: _____

Investigator / responsible person: _____

Outcome: _____

Corrective action: _____

Review date: _____

Appendix B – Reasonable Adjustment Record

Learner name / reference: _____

Programme: _____

Date request received: _____

Barrier identified: _____

Adjustment requested: _____

Evidence / information considered: _____

Decision: Approved / Partially Approved / Not Approved

Reasoning: _____

Implementation arrangements: _____

Assessment(s) affected: _____

Review date: _____

Confidentiality / information-sharing considerations: _____

Appendix C – EDI Monitoring Checklist

- ☐ EDI Policy published and accessible
- ☐ Staff/tutor responsibilities communicated
- ☐ Relevant EDI training completed
- ☐ Accessibility arrangements reviewed
- ☐ Reasonable-adjustment process operational
- ☐ Complaints route clearly published
- ☐ Safeguarding escalation route available
- ☐ EDI concerns recorded appropriately
- ☐ Equality-related themes reviewed in QA
- ☐ Relevant policy changes monitored
- ☐ Corrective actions tracked
- ☐ Annual EDI review completed

Appendix D – Related Policies

- Accessibility Statement
- Learner Support Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Assessment & Appeals Policy
- Learner Code of Conduct
- Privacy Policy
- Quality Assurance Policy