

Equality & Diversity Policy

Intec Business Colleges Ltd believe that excellence will be achieved through recognising the value of every individual. We aim to create an environment that respects the diversity of staff, visitors and learners enabling them to achieve their full potential, to contribute fully and to derive maximum benefit and enjoyment from their involvement and time with Intec.

As stated within the Equality Act 2010, Intec will provide equality of opportunity and will not tolerate discrimination on grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation – or any other grounds.

Your RIGHTS:

- To be treated with respect and dignity
- To be treated fairly with regard to all procedures, assessments and choices
- To receive encouragement to reach your full potential
- To be provided with a safe, supportive and welcoming environment

Your RESPONSIBILITIES:

- To treat others with respect and dignity
- To treat others fairly with regards to all procedures, assessments and choices
- To encourage others to reach their full potential
- To contribute to providing a safe, supportive and welcoming environment

Policy

1. Purpose

- 1.1 Intec Business Colleges acknowledges that it operates within a social context in which for significant numbers of people the experience of racism, sexism, homophobia, or other forms of discrimination, is a part of everyday life. The purpose of this policy is to make explicit our commitment to working to eradicate discrimination, and to promote equality and diversity throughout every aspect of activity we are engaged; particularly in relation to the staff we employ and the learners we work with.
- 1.2 We aim not only to meet the legislative requirements on us to ensure that neither learners nor employees are disadvantaged by virtue of their race, ethnicity, colour, nationality or national origin, gender, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age, responsibility for dependants, employment status, membership of trade union, or any other inappropriate grounds, but go beyond these basic legal requirements to create an environment in which differences are valued and respected, and all individuals treated fairly in ways which brings out the best in them and enable them to achieve their full potential.
- 1.3 We are committed to providing all learners with equal access to high quality services which are relevant and responsive to their needs, whatever their background.
- 1.4 We will seek to build an inclusive workforce, which at all levels broadly reflects the diversity of the communities within which we operate, and an organisation in which all employees feel valued, respected and able to make the best use of their talents.
- 1.5 Intec Business Colleges will make full use of the positive action provisions of the Race Relations Act and the Sex Discrimination Act whenever appropriate and will make reasonable adjustments to premises and working arrangements to overcome substantial barriers a disabled person might face. We are committed to providing, wherever possible, flexible working arrangements in order to assist staff to achieve a satisfactory work life balance. (Please see “Flexible Working Arrangements Policy”)
- 1.6 We will monitor the impact of our Equality and Diversity Policy, both on service delivery and employment practice.

Policy Review

This policy is reviewed annually by the Intec Safety, Health, Equality, Diversity and Safeguarding (SHEDS) Group, organised by the group lead on equality.

Policy last reviewed: March 2022
Next review date: March 2023

Additionally this policy will be reviewed as a result of legislative changes between dates.

2. Background

2.1 The principle of affording equal opportunity in employment recognises not only the basic obligation of an employer to provide equitable treatment in employment matters to all current and potential employees, but also the practical advantages to an employer of refraining from any discriminatory practice which may impair its ability to make full use of the skills and aptitudes available within the potential or existing workforce.

2.2 *Equality*

The concept of equality is well embedded within UK legislation. The first laws were enacted in the 1970s, and related to Equal Pay, Sex and Race Discrimination. Legislation now extends to outlaw discrimination on the basis of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion or belief and age. It seeks to ensure that individuals are not discriminated against, either in terms of employment practices or access to services. Increasingly such legislation not only requires organisations to avoid discrimination, but also to actively promote equality of opportunities for those covered by it. (See appendix 1 for a list of relevant legislation).

2.3 *Diversity*

Diversity is a broader and more inclusive concept, which seeks to go beyond the legal requirements of the equality of opportunities legislation. It emphasises the importance of valuing and respecting the differences between individuals, utilising their talents and experiences, nurturing and developing their potential so that they are able to contribute their best. It recognises that differences between individuals are a reflection of a complex blend of personal attributes and life experiences. The concept of diversity is not enshrined in legislation. Its adoption in this policy reflects a belief on the part of Intec Business Colleges that by recruiting a diverse workforce, by valuing, retaining and developing the potential of each employee, we will gain a skilled, flexible and motivated staff group, representative of the communities within which we operate, and able to deliver the highest standards of service to our diverse range of learners, thereby enabling us to achieve our objectives.

3. Principles

3.1 The principles underpinning the policy are:

Equality - ensuring that:

- Recruitment, selection and progression in the workplace provide equal opportunities through the operation of processes which are transparently open and fair, and which provide positive encouragement to members of groups which are under-represented.

- All members of staff have access to training and development opportunities to assist them in achieving their full potential.
- Processes, systems and procedures do not unfairly exclude individuals or groups.
- All learners have access to services which are accessible, responsive and acceptable to them, with targeted specific provision where necessary.
- Behaviour and processes which are unfair are challenged.
- Opportunities are sought to positively promote equality.

Diversity – ensuring that:

- All employees are encouraged to maximise their contribution to the achievement of company objectives.
- The differences between individual employees are valued and respected, their talents and experiences utilised, and their potential nurtured and developed.
- Different ideas, styles of working and perspectives are encouraged.
- The workforce is an inclusive one, which at all levels reflects the diversity of the communities we operate in.
- The company is open to more flexible ways of working for all employees.
- The service provided to learners takes account of their diversity needs.

Eradicating Discrimination – ensuring that:

- Before implementation, all policies and procedures are assessed for any possible adverse impact for minority groups and amended accordingly.
- Discriminatory behaviour on the part of staff, learners or employers working with Intec, is challenged and where necessary, dealt with by recourse to formal procedures.
- No individual or group experiences oppression by the company as a result of any aspects of diversity.

Respect - ensuring that:

- Different views and perspectives are listened to, and where appropriate taken on board.
- Difficult issues are discussed within a context which encourages open dialogue and learning to take place.
- Individuals/groups are not excluded by virtue of being in the minority.
- Views which undermine, demean or harm others are challenged.
- Communication, whether verbal, written or by electronic means, reflects a company culture which values diversity.

4. Management & Implementation of the Policy

- 4.1 All employees irrespective of their position within the organisation will have responsibility for the effective operation of this policy. This will be effectively managed and monitored through the appraisal process and the setting of individual objectives which should include an equality and diversity focus.

- 4.2 **The Managing Director** has overall responsibility for the management and implementation of this policy and will:
- Ensure that appropriate processes are in place for effective monitoring of staff and learners in relation to their diversity.
 - Hold the Directors to account for delivering on the requirements of this policy.
 - Ensure that all staff are provided with equality and diversity training relevant to their job.
- 4.3 **The SMT** will be required to:
- Assess existing employment practices in relation to this policy and advise upon remedial action where appropriate
 - Co-ordinate the provision of guidance and training to staff on Equality and Diversity. As a minimum all staff shall understand the concepts of direct and indirect discrimination and the distinction between positive action and unlawful positive discrimination.
 - Ensure the implementation of systems for monitoring employment practices so that the latter are consistent with the aims and intent of this policy.
 - Monitor data on applications and appointments to determine parity across the diversity of groups served.
 - Guide Intec's SHEDS group in the development and implementation of training and awareness for apprentices, learners and employers.
 - Apply the principles of this policy in conjunction with section 1 of Intec's Recruitment and Selection policy.
- 4.4 **All Operational Managers** and supervisors must:
- Recognise their responsibility to adopt practices which are consistent with the spirit of this policy and should promote within their staff an awareness of the principles involved.
 - Promote attitudes which welcome diversity and challenge prejudice beyond mere legislative or contractual requirements.
 - At a local level, agree targets and further monitoring and develop strategies to redress any deficiencies identified. These must take account of employees.
 - Apply the principles of this policy in conjunction with section 1 of Intec's Recruitment and Selection policy.
 - Train employees in the delivery of Equality and Diversity training and awareness that is applied to Intec's apprentices, learners and employers.
- 4.5 **Individual Employees** must:
- Co-operate with any measures introduced to develop equal opportunities.
 - Behave in a way that is respectful, non discriminatory and does not bring the company into disrepute.
 - Refrain from taking disciplinary action or decisions which are contrary to the spirit of this policy.

- Avoid being pressured by or placing pressure on other employees to act in a discriminatory manner.
- Desist from harassing, abusing or intimidating other employees on account of their race, sex, disability, sexual orientation or any other matter whatsoever.
- Inform management if they suspect that discrimination or harassment is taking place, in line with the Company's Whistle blowing Policy.
- Operate a zero tolerance of abuse or other harmful behaviours as described in the Safeguarding Policy.
- Apply the principles of this policy and the training provided by Intec when undertaking recruitment, guidance and training with learners.
- Apply the principles of this policy and the training provided by Intec when providing guidance and support to employers.

4.6 **Employee Training** in equality and diversity must:

- Be provided and awareness training delivered to all new employees as part of their company induction and as detailed in the employee induction manual.
- Be scheduled annually as part of the Intec training plan.
- Be developed by Intec's Equality and Diversity Lead and approved by the organisations Safety, Health, Equality, Diversity and Safety (SHEDS) Group.
- Include in monthly awareness activities circulated across the business and relevant to the issues of the day. This provides up to date knowledge for employees of the issues which may be of interest to or affect our learners and customers.

5. **Monitoring of the Policy**

5.1 The Managing Director and SMT are responsible for monitoring the application of this policy this will be done through quarterly employee recruitment reporting, employee surveys, learner data reports, learner and employer feedback forums, learner and employer surveys and ad hoc feedback.

6. **Freedom of Information Act**

6.1 The content of this policy can be made available under the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Signed



Darren Bunting

Managing Director