

SM11 Diversity and Equal Opportunity Policy

ADDITIONAL NOTES

Added: all our courses and qualifications will ensure fair assessment for all learners; the language we use in our materials is clear, free from bias and appropriate to the target group;

SCOPE

This policy is aimed at our ILC Training staff and learners, and applies the principles of diversity and equality. This policy applies to all ILC courses internationally awarded and locally developed.

POLICY STATEMENT

This Quality Assurance Policy has been formulated and revised to guide the ongoing development and implementation of an Institutional Quality Management System towards ongoing quality enhancement and the fostering of a culture of continuous improvement. The development of a Quality Management System at ILC Training is therefore not regarded as an event but rather as an ongoing process.

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

TERM	DEFINITION
Equality (or equal opportunities)	is about protecting certain groups of staff or learners against unfair treatment based on a particular personal characteristic. This protection is normally based on those groups covered by legislation, i.e. sex, gender, marital status, race, ethnic origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age or disability.
Diversity	is about recognizing, valuing and taking account of people's different backgrounds, knowledge, skills, and experiences, and encouraging and using those differences to create a productive and effective workforce and learning environment.
Race and nationality	The terms 'race and nationality' refer to an individual's race, color, nationality and ethnicity.

Disability	The term 'disable' refers to a man or a woman who: Has a physical or mental impairment, with or without outward visible signs. The impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to perform normal activities.
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Policy Introduction

ILC Training is committed to high levels of quality assurance and policies that are open, transparent and free from bias.

The commitment to equal opportunities for all, underpins and impacts on every area of the organization as well as stakeholders both internal and external to ILC Training.

Courses and Qualifications

We aim to ensure that diversity and equality are promoted in the development of our courses and in access to our qualifications and services, and that unlawful or unfair discrimination, whether direct or indirect, is eliminated. As an vocational institute, we will ensure that:

- this policy is made freely available to our staff, stakeholders and learners;
- the widest possible diversity of learners can access the content and assessment of our courses and qualifications;
- the entry requirements, content and assessment demands of our courses and qualifications are appropriate to the knowledge, understanding and skills specified and do not act as unnecessary barriers to achievement;
- all our courses and qualifications will ensure fair assessment for all learners;
- the language we use in our materials is clear, free from bias and appropriate to the target group;
- we aim to produce and endorse material that does not cause offence;
- all our courses and qualifications are reviewed against this policy;
- we will always act fairly when working with stakeholders and learners;
- we will always support and demonstrate the principles of diversity and equality.

ILC Training will seek to ensure that its qualifications are:

- Based on assessment of the outcomes of learning, arrived at independently of any particular mode, duration or location of learning.
- Available to all those who are able to achieve the required standards and free from unnecessary barriers that restrict access and progression.

Learners

ILC Training will:

- Ensure that access to learning opportunities and fair assessment is open to all who can benefit without compromising the integrity of the qualifications.
- Ensure content and language of all written information including assessment materials and programs are non-discriminatory and free from social and racial bias or stereotypical wording.
- Ensure access, where needed, to additional learning support after assessment of individual needs.

In some instances, learners may require adjustments to the assessment process to give them an equal opportunity. ILC Training aims to ensure that:

- All reasonable provision is made to cater for those for whom assessment adjustments are appropriate.
- Assessment is valid and reliable to ensure that all learners receive fair and equitable treatment.

Employment

In employment, ILC Training aims to:

- Ensure that all applicants for employment at ILC Training are treated fairly on the basis of their merits, abilities, qualifications and suitability for appointment and that appointment procedures do not discriminate on the basis of criteria which cannot be justified by the demands of the post
- Ensure that all employees of ILC Training are trained, appraised, given access to relevant work experience, promoted and otherwise treated on the basis of their relevant merits, qualifications, abilities and experience
- Establish and maintain appropriate mechanisms whereby staff or job applicants who feel that they have been unfairly treated can have their complaints investigated
- Integrate principles of equal opportunities and practical examples of their application into all training programs for staff with managerial responsibilities
- Maintain and develop programs to accommodate disadvantaged staff or staff with disabilities, adjusting the work environment and procedures where necessary
- Identify, develop, and support positive action measures to ensure that all members of staff have equal opportunities, and, where appropriate, encouragement, to obtain employment, promotion, and further education and training for personal and career development
- Ensure that this policy is made known to all employees.

Dignity and Respect

As employees of ILC Training, we all have a responsibility to treat colleagues, learners and other visitors with dignity and respect.

Staff are expected to work in a cooperative and collaborative manner with teams and individuals throughout ILC Training and when representing ILC Training externally.

Colleagues are encouraged to address any issues that may arise themselves on an informal basis when this is appropriate and a positive outcome is possible.

Staff are also urged to consider the potential impact of their own behaviour when an issue is raised by a colleague.

Managers are required to promote dignity and respect by their own behaviour and to address concerns raised in accordance with the relevant procedures referenced in this document.

ILC Training is committed to embedding an inclusive and respectful workplace culture. The following measures have been adopted in order to demonstrate this commitment:

- Developing a Code of Conduct to clarify what is unacceptable behaviour
Reviewing or Grievance and Disciplinary Procedure
- Reviewing our approach to training and communications in this area
- Ensuring a process for students to report harassment.

Sexual Harassment and Assault

ILC Training recognizes the profound and lasting impact that sexual harassment and assault can have on those targeted and is committed to a 'zero tolerance' approach at ILC Training.

Sexual Harassment by Students

Students shall not engage in sexual harassment toward another student or an ILC Training employee. A substantiated charge of sexual harassment against a student shall result in disciplinary action.

Sexual harassment by a student includes unwanted and unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, whether by word, gesture, or any other sexual conduct, including requests for sexual favors.

Sexual Harassment/Abuse by Employees

ILC Training employees are prohibited from sexually harassing or sexually abusing students. Romantic relationships between students and employees are prohibited.

What Is Relationship Harassment?

ILC prohibits sexual harassment and relationship harassment based on a person's race, color, sex, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or religion.

Examples of relationship harassment against a student may include but are not limited to, physical or sexual assaults, name-calling, put-downs, threats to hurt the student or the student's family members or members of the student's household, destroying property belonging to the student, threats to commit suicide or homicide if the student ends the relationship, attempts to isolate the student from friends and family, stalking, or encouraging others to engage in these behaviors against the targeted student.

Bullying and Harassment

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, and/or an abuse or misuse of power that is meant to undermine, humiliate or injure the person on the receiving end.

Harassment is unwanted conduct related to relevant protected characteristics, which are sex, gender reassignment, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief and age, that:

- has the purpose of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person; or
- is reasonably considered by that person to have the effect of violating their dignity or of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them, even if this effect was not intended by the person responsible for the conduct.

Conduct may be harassment whether or not the person behaving in that way intends to offend. Something intended as a "joke" may offend another person. Different people find different things acceptable. Everyone has the right to decide what behaviour is acceptable to them and to have their feelings respected by others. Behaviour which any reasonable person would realise would be likely to offend will be harassment without the recipient having to make it clear in advance that behaviour of that type is not acceptable to them

Harassment may also occur where a person engages in unwanted conduct towards another because they perceive that the recipient has a protected characteristic (for example, a perception that they are disabled), when the recipient does not, in fact, have that protected characteristic.

There may also be circumstances in which an individual is subjected to unwanted conduct from a third party, such as a learner or stakeholder. If an employee feels that they have been bullied or harassed by learners, suppliers, vendors or stakeholders, they should report any such behaviour to their manager who will take appropriate action. Bullying or harassment of learners, suppliers, vendors or stakeholders or others by an employee will be dealt with through the disciplinary procedure.

A single incident can be harassment if it is sufficiently serious.

All bullying and harassment is misconduct and is a disciplinary offence which will be dealt with. Bullying or harassment will often be gross misconduct, which can lead to dismissal without notice.

Bullying or harassment will constitute unlawful discrimination where it relates to one of the protected characteristics, which are sex, gender reassignment, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief and age. Serious bullying or harassment may amount to other civil or criminal offences.

Responsibilities and General Discipline Guidelines

Key responsibilities under this policy are set out below:

All managers are responsible for ensuring proactive dialogue about equal opportunities issues and practices with suppliers, study centers, trainers and learners. They are responsible for ensuring that:

- learners and staff are not disadvantaged in any way and that complaints of discrimination or offensive behavior are dealt with promptly.
- Trainers are responsible for promoting equality of opportunity amongst learners, and ensuring that all instances of contravention of the policy are reported promptly to their manager. They should also report examples of good practice that can be disseminated throughout ILC Training.
- This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure continued compliance.

Disciplinary Consequences:

- Violations of this policy, regardless of whether an actual law has been violated, will not be tolerated. ILC Training will promptly, thoroughly and fairly investigate every issue that is brought to its attention in this area and will take disciplinary action, when appropriate, up to and including termination of employment.

Discipline shall be administered when necessary to protect learners, ILC employees, or property and to maintain essential order and discipline. Learners and ILC employees shall be treated fairly and equitably. Discipline shall be based on a careful assessment of the circumstances of each case. ILC management should use caution and should ordinarily consider appropriate interventions. Factors that must be considered in each decision concerning removal from ILC Training courses or employee write ups, or dismissal:

- seriousness of the offense
- individual's intent or lack of intent at the time the student engaged in the conduct
- individual's disciplinary history
- individual's attitude
- potential effect of the misconduct on the ILC Training environment
- whether the facts of the case warrant consideration of self-defense as a mitigating factor in the assessment of any punishment

Management will use their professional judgment to determine the most effective way to correct the individual's misconduct. Disciplinary actions apply equally to all individuals.

Related Policies and Other References

Health and Safety

Student Code of Conduct

Admissions and Induction Policy

Admissions Appeal policy

Academic Appeals policy