

## Equality and Diversity Policy

Title	Equality and Diversity Policy
Reference	HRP023
Version	1.0
Date	16 February 2007
Author	HR
Approved by	EOSG
Classification	UNCLASSIFIED
Revision Date	February 2008

Version	Date	Description
0.1		Inherited Policy
0.2	16/02/07	Policy updated and approved by EOSG
1.0	Jan 08	Policy updated to reflect OD, style guide and EIA

### 1.0 Commitment to Equality of Opportunity

- 1.1 The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) is committed to a policy of providing equality of opportunity for all.
- 1.2 HEFCW believes our employees are our most valuable asset. The achievement of our purpose and vision can only be met if we make full use of and foster the resources and talents presented through our staff. This can only be done by recognising and valuing individual differences in employees and potential employees, and how these differences may be harnessed to build a strong and diverse organisation.
- 1.3 HEFCW will not accept any form of unlawful or unfair discrimination. This includes harassment, victimisation, bullying or discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic/national origins, religious beliefs, political opinions, marital/parental status, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical/mental disabilities, trade union membership/activities. All employees and potential employees will be treated with the utmost dignity and respect.
- 1.4 This policy applies to the advertisement of jobs, recruitment and appointment to them, training, appraisals, conditions of work, pay and to every other aspect of employment including dealing with disciplinary matters and grievances.

1.5 The principles of equal, courteous, respectful treatment must also be afforded to individuals, whether clients, suppliers, contractors, or other business associates. HEFCW has produced a set of values that support these principles (HEFCW's Values are available on the Intranet).

1.6 A Glossary of Terms is provided at the end of this policy.

## **2.0 Responsibilities**

2.1 HEFCW takes the issue of equality of opportunity seriously and seeks to keep all employees aware of its policy in this respect. Equality of opportunity is about good employment practices and efficient use of HEFCW's most valuable asset, our employees.

2.2 All employees have a personal responsibility for ensuring appropriate action and behaviour in accordance with the policy objectives.

2.3 All line managers are responsible for ensuring policy implementation and maintenance, including monitoring and identifying and addressing any deviations from the policy that may occur.

2.4 HR will provide guidance, facilitate and enable line managers to implement, maintain and update the policy on an on-going basis.

2.5 HR will promote policy implementation and progress through the design, development, delivery and review of learning activities.

## **3.0 Equal opportunities legislation and guiding principles**

3.1 All HR policies and procedures will comply with the requirements of current legislation.

3.2 Policies and procedure will be reviewed on an on-going basis and in the light of new or revised legislation.

## **4.0 Strategy for achieving the objectives of the policy**

4.1 The objectives of this policy will be achieved through:

Planning:

- designing and developing appropriate HR policies, procedures and practices relevant to HEFCW's strategy;
- effective HR planning to ensure that the supply of talented employees matches demand.

## Employment practices:

- attracting and selecting high-calibre employees through the application of valid, reliable and fair recruitment and selection methods at all times;
- ensuring employees are effectively inducted into the organisation and know the policies, procedures, rules and standards of expected behaviour
- fair and just disciplinary, grievance and dispute procedures;
- enabling employees to achieve their full capacity and potential, providing them with career opportunities and relevant training and development;
- staying abreast of business, legislative, technological, economic and societal changes in the UK, Europe and elsewhere to ensure that HEFCW adopts contemporary best-practice HR policies and practices.

## Communication:

- building a positive and co-operative partnership with Works Council;
- encouraging effective and efficient communication throughout HEFCW;
- promoting conditions where innovation and teamwork can flourish.

## 4.2 Furthermore, HEFCW will work towards equality of opportunity and diversity by ensuring that:

- no employee or job applicant receives less favourable treatment on grounds which are not related to the job – e.g. gender, race, disability, nationality etc.;
- employees' abilities, skills, potential and other job-relevant competencies are used in making personnel decisions on recruitment and selection, training and development, performance review and planning etc.;
- employees are valued as individuals and their differences accepted, respected, understood and utilised to contribute to HEFCW's strategy and plans;
- employees' dignity is safeguarded and their work environment is not threatening, offensive or intimidating;
- attitudes and behaviours adopted by management reflect HEFCW's commitment to equality of opportunity and diversity and do not discriminate on grounds unrelated to work performance;
- all employees are given the opportunity and are encouraged to develop their careers through continuous learning and development in line with their needs and HEFCW's needs; and
- management has access to up-to-date, relevant knowledge, experience, skills and procedures to enable them to demonstrate effective and non-discriminatory employee leadership.

## 5.0 Code of Practice

### 5.1 HEFCW's commitment to equality and diversity as outlined above is supported by a Code of Practice governing HR practice and procedure.

## 6.0 Complaints procedure

- 6.1 HEFCW has in place an Equal Opportunities Harassment (anti-discrimination) Policy and Equal Opportunities Complaints Procedure in support of our Equality and Diversity Policy.
- 6.2 In the event of an individual wishing to make a complaint in respect of his or her treatment contrary to this policy, reference should be made to the Equal Opportunities Harassment (anti-discrimination) Policy and Equal Opportunities Complaints Procedures.
- 6.3 Acts of unlawful discrimination will not be tolerated and all instances of such behaviour or alleged behaviour will be treated seriously, be fully investigated and may be subject to HEFCW's disciplinary procedures.

## Glossary of terms

**Discrimination** occurs when people are treated unfairly or less favourably, or are excluded or disadvantaged when compared with people from other groups.

Some forms of discrimination are defined by law, such as Race , Sex, Disability and Age.

### Race Discrimination

Direct discrimination:

Legislation makes unlawful the treatment of a person less favourably on the grounds of race, nationality (including citizenship) or ethnic or national origins.

Indirect discrimination:

Legislation makes it unlawful to apply any requirement or a condition which, though applied equally to everybody, is such that a considerably smaller proportion of people of one racial group can comply with it than a proportion of other people – unless the requirement or condition can be shown to be justifiable irrespective of colour, race etc.

### Sex Discrimination

The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (SDA) which makes discrimination unlawful on the grounds of sex and marital status, and gender reassignment both through In direct and indirect discrimination.

Examples of direct and indirect discrimination:

The following examples may be obvious but they serve to demonstrate and draw distinction between what is regarded as being direct discrimination and that regarded as being indirect discrimination.

Direct: In a recruitment context, a statement such as “White applicants only need apply” or a candidate is not shortlisted for interview on the basis of he/she having a foreign-sounding name.

Indirect: In a recruitment context, statement such as “A GCSE in physics required”. Where there is no genuine reason for an individual occupying this post to possess a qualification in physics, this can be deemed indirect discrimination against women, as fewer females than males undertake qualifications in physics, and therefore fewer female candidates are able to comply with the requirements.

## **Disability Discrimination**

Legislation makes it unlawful to discriminate against current or prospective disabled employees. It requires employers to make reasonable adjustment to employment arrangements or premises if they substantially disadvantage a disabled employee or a disabled applicant, compared with a non-disabled individual. Legislation defines “disability” as a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

## **Age Discrimination**

Using age as criteria for taking action is unlawful and covers all age groups. Age discrimination follows the same pattern as existing forms of discrimination law in the UK, namely direct and indirect discrimination, victimisation and harassment. However, the regulations have a wide impact on other areas of employment law including unfair dismissal and redundancy provisions

Victimisation occurs when a person is treated less favourably than others are because they might take or have taken action against discrimination or harassment either at law or through internal procedures such as the Disciplinary or Grievance procedure.

Harassment is unwanted conduct affecting the dignity of an employee at work. It involves someone behaving towards another in a way that is likely to embarrass, humiliate, intimidate, anger (please refer to the Equal Opportunities Harassment (anti-discrimination) Policy and Equal Opportunities Complaints Procedures for a fuller description).