

# **Design Centre Online Limited trading as Inkberrow Design Centre (IDC)**

**Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**

**2015**

## Policy Statement

IDC is committed to supporting, developing and promoting equality and diversity in all of its practices and activities and aims to establish an inclusive culture free from discrimination and based upon the values of dignity, courtesy and respect. We will support and develop the staff and student populations through providing all with access to facilities, personal and career development opportunities, employment and study on the basis of equality. IDC is committed to eliminating discrimination and advancing equality on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief (including lack of belief), sex and sexual orientation<sup>1</sup> and to fostering good relations between different groups.

This commitment supports the organisational principles of IDC and upholds the ethos of establishing a culture based on dignity, courtesy and respect.

This policy builds upon the foundation of equality legislation and anti-discrimination guidance and strives, not only to comply with legal requirements, but to use these to ensure that IDC endeavours to exemplify best practice.

IDC values diversity and recognises that the company is greatly enhanced by the disparate range of backgrounds, experiences, views, beliefs and cultures represented within its staff and student populations. IDC aims to embrace diversity in all of its activities and proudly acknowledges that variety and difference are intrinsic to the wellbeing and future development of the company.

The Equality and Diversity policy underpins the Mission of IDC and is integral to the success of the company.

This is an over-arching policy designed to outline the fundamental principles of IDC's commitment to equality and diversity and will be supported by specific equality policies and action plans.

The policy applies to all students and applicants, to all applicants for posts with IDC, to all staff employed on a full time or part-time basis, to all staff on permanent or temporary contracts, to agency staff, to contract holders and visitors and to sub-contractors undertaking work on the site of IDC.

---

<sup>1</sup> Under the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics are the grounds upon which discrimination is unlawful. The protected characteristics (section 4) under the Act are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief (including lack of belief), sex and sexual orientation.

## Legislative Background

Under Equality legislation it is unlawful to:

- discriminate directly against anyone and treat him/her less favourably than others on the grounds of the protected characteristics of: age (unless this can be justified as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim), disability (including discrimination arising from a disability and failure to make reasonable adjustments), gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief (including lack of belief), sex and sexual orientation. This also includes discrimination based on perception of the person e.g. a belief that someone is gay or a belief that someone is disabled even if this is not actually true.
- discriminate against someone for reasons relating to their association with a person on the grounds of the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation e.g. discriminating against an employee/student because they have a disabled dependant.
- discriminate indirectly against anyone by applying a criterion, provision or practice which disadvantages people with a protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion and belief (including lack of belief), sex and sexual orientation) unless the person applying the provision can justify it as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- subject someone to harassment for reasons relating to age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion and belief (including lack of belief), sex and sexual orientation. This includes behaviour that an individual finds offensive on these grounds even if the behaviour is not directed at the individual. It is unlawful to treat a person less favourably because they either submit to, or reject, sexual harassment or harassment related to their sex. An employer also has responsibilities relating to harassment of employees by third parties as outlined in the Dignity at Work and Study Policy.
- victimise someone because s/he has made, or intends to make, a complaint or allegation or has given or intends to give evidence in relation to a complaint of discrimination in line with the Equality Act.

## Objectives:

The aim of this policy is to ensure that in carrying out its activities IDC will have due regard to:

- eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advancing equality of opportunity, across all the activities of the university between different groups
- fostering good relations between people of a diverse background.

In the implementation of this policy IDC will aim to:

- develop and promote a culture of equality and diversity throughout the institution;
- develop and promote a culture of dignity, courtesy and respect;
- support all staff and students, including provision of relevant support relating to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief (including lack of belief), sex and sexual orientation.
- work to prevent all forms of unlawful discrimination;
- deal with all forms of discrimination consistently and effectively;
- ensure that the Equality and Diversity policy influences and informs the culture of IDC.

## Definitions

**Equal opportunities** refers to the elimination of unlawful and unfair direct and indirect discrimination of particular groups and promoting equal access, treatment and outcomes that take into account specific needs of individuals.

**Diversity** encompasses visible and non-visible individual differences that includes, but is not limited to, differences protected by anti-discrimination legislation. Appreciating diversity is about valuing differences and recognising that everyone through their unique mixture of skills and experience has their own valuable contribution to make.

It is the aim of IDC is that individuals and groups within the company are not only treated on the basis of equality, but that their diverse contributions to the culture of the company are recognised and developed.

## **Roles and Responsibilities:**

It is incumbent upon all members of the IDC community behave with dignity, courtesy and respect and to act in a manner that does not unlawfully discriminate at all times.

### **Role of Staff and Volunteers**

- to actively to encourage non-discriminatory practices and to report any incidences of behaviour that fail to comply with this policy;
- to support the aims of the IDC Equality and Diversity policy;
- to undertake appropriate equality and diversity training.

### **Role of Students**

- actively to encourage non-discriminatory practices and to report any incidences of behaviour that fail to comply with this policy;
- to support the aims of IDC's Equality and Diversity policy;
- to be aware of equality and diversity issues.

### **Role of Human Resources**

- to provide appropriate equality and diversity awareness and training for all staff;
- to support management in implementing the policy;
- to ensure that recruitment advertising, selection and appointment procedures, performance management processes and disciplinary grievance processes are fair and transparent and are consistently applied;
- to monitor employment equality data and to publish the findings of monitoring activity, as appropriate.

### **Role of the Management Team**

- to ensure that they work to promote equality and diversity as an integral part of the services they provide and the policies and procedures they both develop and apply;
- to ensure that all members of staff within the Management Team receive the appropriate equality and diversity training;
- to investigate all matters of alleged discrimination, harassment and inappropriate behaviour promptly and thoroughly;

- to ensure that selection and appointment procedures, performance management processes, staff development opportunities and disciplinary and grievance processes are fairly and consistently applied to all staff;
- to treat all applications for flexible practices on a fair and equitable basis and to provide reasonable and objective reasons when such requests must be refused;
- to ensure that selection and admissions procedures, assessment processes, career development opportunities and disciplinary and complaints procedures are fairly and consistently applied to all students within the Management Team;
- to ensure that equality and diversity issues are considered as part of the Management planning processes.

#### **Role of Equality and Diversity Officer**

- to advise the IDC Management Team on legal compliance and best practice in all matters relating to equality and diversity;
- to devise and recommend policies, procedures and action plans to ensure that all legislative requirements are met and best practice adopted;
- to collect and review data relevant to diversity and equality matters relating to students or employees on a regular basis and recommend changes to policies and procedures as appropriate;
- to advise on the provision of appropriate training and awareness-raising in relation to all equal opportunities and diversity matters.

#### **Role of the IDC Director**

- to provide leadership in the operation and implementation of the Equality and Diversity policy;
- to be accountable for the actions of IDC in relation to this policy.

#### **Application of the Policy: Staff and Volunteers**

##### *Recruitment and Selection*

- recruitment advertising will encourage applications from all sectors of the community reflecting IDC's commitment to equality and diversity;
- recruitment advertising will appear in publications appropriate to the audience capable of producing the best candidates (subject to budget considerations);

- job descriptions, person specifications and recruitment advertisements will be written on the basis of the essential and justifiable requirements of the position;
- shortlisting, appointment and rejection decisions will be transparent and justifiable and will be supported by written comments.

#### *Grading and Promotion*

- all grading and promotions criteria and procedures will be free from prejudice and must be applied equitably and consistently.

#### *Staff and Volunteer Development*

- all staff will have equal access to induction, personal and career development opportunities and facilities.

#### *Performance Management*

- probation and appraisal procedures will be clear and transparent and will be applied fairly across all staff.

#### *Discipline and Grievance*

- disciplinary and grievance procedures will be applied fairly and transparently for all staff;
- allegations of discrimination, harassment or inappropriate behaviour will be dealt with under the appropriate disciplinary procedures for staff.

### **Applications of the Policy: Students**

#### *Recruitment, Selection and Admission*

- all information contained in prospectuses, websites and other material used in the recruitment of students should promote equality of opportunity and make reference to this policy;
- all staff involved in the recruitment, selection and admission of students will have an awareness of equality and diversity.

#### *Assessment*

- there will be clear, consistent and transparent criteria for student assessments and all assessments will take place on an equal opportunities basis.

#### *Career Planning and Participation*

- all students will have access to career planning support and will be encouraged to participate fully in the academic, cultural and social life of IDC.

#### *Discipline and Student Complaints*

- discipline and student complaints procedures will be applied fairly and transparently for all students;

- allegations of harassment or discrimination will be dealt with under the Student Disciplinary Code.

## **Training**

Equality and diversity awareness raising and training will be mandatory for all staff. Information will be provided to all students in order to raise awareness of equality and diversity and the contents of this policy.

## **Communication**

This policy will normally be available on the IDC website at [www.inkberrowdesigncentre.co.uk](http://www.inkberrowdesigncentre.co.uk). It will also be available in printed form on request and, if requested, will be made available in different formats (eg. large print, audio).

Contact:  
Shelley Phellen, Equality & Diversity Manager  
07786 861983

## **Monitoring**

Statistics will be gathered to monitor equality across all aspects of IDC's processes and will be used to inform future practice.

## **Confidentiality**

Any information disclosed to the company in relation equality and diversity issues will be kept strictly confidential in accordance with legislative requirements.

## **Breach of Policy**

Contravention of the Equality and Diversity policy will be treated as a disciplinary matter and offenders will be dealt with under IDC's staff disciplinary policies or the Student Disciplinary Code as appropriate.

## **Revision**

This policy will be revised on a 3-year basis or when relevant new legislation comes into place.

## **Sources of Further Guidance:**

Equality Act 2010

Human Rights Act 1998

Equality & Human Rights Commission:

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/>

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis and/or when changes to practices and legislation requires an update.