

Equality and Diversity Policy

Introduction

At Acuity, we believe that equal opportunities means:

Policies and Practices

Creating a working environment where all employees and potential employees and associates have fair and equal access to available opportunities and enjoy fair and unbiased treatment.

Communication

Keeping employees and associates informed of changes and consulting them on issues which directly affect their work.

Involvement

Increasing involvement and commitment by encouraging staff and associates to share their ideas and to use their talents.

Quality of Service

Recognising that employees are normally closest to Acuity's clients and as such are well placed to suggest how services could be improved. Equal opportunities can ultimately help to improve the quality of service we provide to our customers.

Defining Equality and Diversity

Equality means creating a fairer society where everyone can participate and has the opportunity to fulfil their full potential. Equality recognizes different groups in society and seeks to ensure fair representation of all the groups. It is backed by legislation to address unfair discrimination towards a particular group. In some circumstances positive action can be encouraged to address potential or real discrimination. It is often summarised in terms of:

- Equal access
- Equal treatment
- Equal shares
- Equal outcomes

Diversity is about the recognition and valuing of difference between individuals. It is about creating a working culture and practices that recognise, respect, value and harness difference for the benefit of the organisation and the individual.

Equality and diversity are not inter-changeable but are inter-dependent. There is no equality of opportunity if difference is not recognised and valued. Diversity is more about



the collective mix of individuals, cultures and organisation expertise – both the differences that distinguish us and the commonalities that connect us for the benefit of the individual and the organisation.

What this means for Acuity

- We are committed to providing equality of opportunity to all. Our aim is to treat all employees, associates and prospective employees/associates with integrity, respect and consideration.
- We aim to ensure that individuals are recruited, selected, trained and promoted on the basis of ability, job requirements, skills, aptitudes and other objective criteria.
- All applicants and employees will always be dealt with impartially and on objective criteria so no individual or group is disadvantaged.
- We must all ensure that we treat each other with respect and that we do not treat anyone in an unfair manner on account of their age, race, colour, creed, nationality, ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, refugee status, religious beliefs/creed, marital status, disability long term condition such as HIV/Aids.
- Individuals will be selected, trained, promoted and treated on the basis of their abilities, merits and development potential measured against the job requirements. Every employee will be given equal opportunity to show their ability to progress within the organisation.
- Our main focus, our code of conduct and policy on harassment are some of the means by which we implement this policy. We monitor our processes to ensure we can demonstrate our commitments. Our Learning and Development Policy ensures that fair access is provided for learning opportunities that will assist the individual. All our policies and procedures are centred on fair and equal treatment for all. We also provide training for all staff in Diversity and Equality.

Your rights and Responsibilities

You have the right to work in an environment that is free of direct or indirect discrimination and free of victimisation. You have a right to be treated with dignity and respect, for you as an individual and for the role that you perform. You have a right to report any unfair or inappropriate activities or comments.

Every employee and associate has a contractual responsibility not to discriminate against anyone at work and it is everyone's responsibility to promote a supportive workplace where discrimination cannot flourish



Every employee, associate, client etc is expected to adhere to this policy. All staff and associates are expected to be aware of the standards of behaviour expected of them and any breaches will be dealt with immediately.

Any behaviour considered to be in breach of this policy may result in:

- Disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal for staff
- Police action if deemed appropriate

Positive Action

Acuity may take action to use positive methods to address under-representation of a particular group within the workforce under certain specific circumstances. We are committed to employing disabled people and interview all applicants with a disability who meet the essential criteria on a personal specification consider them on their abilities. We make every effort when an employee becomes disabled to ensure that they stay in employment.

Diversity and Equality Monitoring

To help Acuity assess the effectiveness of this policy we will regularly analyse staffing statistics including workforce composition, recruitment, training, appraisal results and exit interviews by age, gender and ethnicity. This information will be compared with relevant external data and we will agree performance indicators so that we can review our progress. The information about your own details remains confidential.

Working with clients

Acuity will ensure that we comply with and work in spirit with equality and diversity policies held by clients we are contracted to supply services for.

Monitoring and Review

The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis or following any changes in legislation or statutory guidance.

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