

Equality diversity & inclusion policy

1 Introduction

As part of the commitment made by Qa Research to equality of opportunity, diversity, and inclusion Qa has adopted a policy statement covering its practices and procedures.

This document outlines the policy that must be adhered to by every employee. All breaches of this policy will be investigated and, where appropriate, disciplinary procedures followed.

Equal Opportunities relates to treating people the same although they may belong to certain groups. Equal Opportunities relates to a legal framework which makes it illegal to discriminate against people because they belong to particular groups.

Diversity is a broader concept that builds upon the progress made through equal opportunities. Everyone is different and diversity is about recognising, respecting, and valuing the differences we each bring to work.

Inclusion is actively embracing people with diverse perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences. Inclusion can be felt, but can also be seen through systems, processes, policies, and behaviours.

Equal opportunities, diversity, and inclusion work together by addressing the inequalities and barriers faced by people in under-represented groups and by valuing, learning, and benefiting from the diverse experiences, cultures and backgrounds in society and our staff.

2 Statement of policy

The aim of this policy is to provide equality, fairness and respect for all in our employment, whether temporary, part-time or full-time and to communicate the commitment of the Board of Directors and senior management team to promotion of equality of opportunity, diversity, and inclusion at Qa Research.

Our commitment to equality of opportunity also extends to the way we conduct our research and deal with our clients, sub-contractors, partners, suppliers, and other organisations.

It is our policy to provide employment equality to all irrespective of:

- Gender, including gender reassignment
- Marital or civil partnership status

- Having or not having dependants
- Religious belief or political opinion
- Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins)
- Disability
- Sexual Orientation
- Age
- Pregnancy or maternity

To oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in:

- Pay and benefits
- Terms and conditions of employment
- Dealing with grievances and discipline
- Dismissal
- Redundancy
- Leave for parents
- Requests for flexible working
- Selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities

We are opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. All job applicants, employees, others who work for us and all those we deal with, will be treated fairly, and will not be discriminated against on any of the above grounds. Decisions about recruitment and selection, promotion, discipline, dismissal, training, or any other benefit will be made objectively and without unlawful discrimination.

We recognise that the provision of equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion in the workplace is not only good management practice; it also makes sound business sense. Our EDI policy will help all those who work for us to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be utilised fully to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

Commitments

We are committed to:

- promoting equality for all persons
- following equal opportunities policies in the way we recruit and treat staff, conduct our research and deal with our clients, sub-contractors, partners, suppliers and other organisations
- maintaining a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.
- fulfilling all our legal obligations under the equality legislation and associated codes of practice
- complying with our own equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion policy and associated policies

- making opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
- making decisions concerning staff being based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).
- regarding breaches of this policy as misconduct which could lead to disciplinary procedures. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.
- reviewing employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness and update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law.

3 Implementation

The Commercial Director has specific responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy. Directors, managers and supervisors also have responsibilities and we expect all our employees to abide by the policy and help create and sustain an environment of equity, diversity and inclusion which is its objective.

To implement this policy, we will:

- Communicate the policy to employees (at induction and following any policy amendments) and publish the policy in Qa's staff handbook and on our company website.
- Provide equality training and guidance as appropriate, including training on induction and on management courses.
- Qa's managers and directors promote equality of opportunity for their staff in learning and development.

Wherever possible, vacancies will be advertised simultaneously internally and externally, and steps will be taken to ensure that knowledge of vacancies reaches under-represented groups internally and externally.

Selection criteria (job description and employee specification) will be kept under review to ensure that they are justifiable on non-discriminatory grounds as being essential for the effective performance of a job.

Wherever possible, more than one person will be involved in the selection, interview and recruitment process, and will have received training in non-discriminatory selection techniques.

Reasons for the selection and rejection of applicants will be recorded.

4 Complaints

Employees who believe that they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation are entitled to raise the matter through the agreed grievance procedures. A

copy of these procedures is contained within the staff handbook or from the HR Manager. Complaints of discrimination will be dealt with seriously, promptly, and confidentially.

In addition to our internal procedures, employees have the right to pursue complaints of discrimination to an employment tribunal under anti-discrimination legislation.

However, employees wishing to make a complaint to a tribunal will be required to raise their complaint under our internal grievance procedures first.

Every effort will be made to ensure that employees who make complaints will not be victimised. Any complaint of victimisation will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially. Victimisation will result in disciplinary action and may warrant dismissal.

5 Approval & review

This policy is fully supported by the board of directors and senior management and will be reviewed annually.



Richard Bryan
Managing Director

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