

Equal Opportunities Policy

Effective From: 02 September 2016

Review Date: 01 September 2019



NATIONAL
COLLEGE
CREATIVE
INDUSTRIES

1 Scope and purpose of the policy

- 1.1 This policy applies to all aspects of our relationship with staff and to relations between staff members at all levels. This includes job advertisements, recruitment and selection, training and development, opportunities for promotion, conditions of service, pay and benefits, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and termination of employment.
- 1.2 We will take appropriate steps to accommodate the requirements of different religions, cultures, and domestic responsibilities.
- 1.3 We will not discriminate on grounds of any of the 'protected characteristics' defined in the Equality Act 2010. The College is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff or users of its services, regardless of age, race, gender, gender reassignment, marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion, belief, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background.

2 Forms of discrimination

- 2.1 Discrimination by or against an employee is generally prohibited unless there is a specific legal exemption. Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally.
- 2.2 Direct discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more of the protected characteristics set out above. For example, rejecting an applicant on the grounds of their race because they would not "fit in" would be direct discrimination.
- 2.3 Indirect discrimination occurs where someone is disadvantaged by an unjustified provision, criterion or practice that also puts other people with the same protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage. For example, a requirement to work full time may put women at a particular disadvantage because they may have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement will need to be objectively justified.
- 2.4 Harassment related to any of the protected characteristics is prohibited. Harassment is unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. Harassment is dealt with further in our Dignity at Work Policy.
- 2.5 Victimisation is also prohibited. This is less favourable treatment of someone who has complained or given information about discrimination or harassment, or supported someone else's complaint.

3 Recruitment and selection

- 3.1 We aim to ensure that no job applicant suffers discrimination because of any of the protected characteristics above. Our recruitment procedures are reviewed regularly to ensure that individuals are treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities. Job selection criteria are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are relevant to the job and are not disproportionate. A job advertisement will make it clear if the College is going to apply for a DBS check.

- 3.2 Job advertisements should avoid stereotyping or using wording that may discourage particular groups from applying.
 - 3.3 We take steps to ensure that our vacancies are advertised to a diverse labour market.
 - 3.4 Applicants should not be asked about health or disability or past convictions before a job offer is made. There are limited exceptions which should only be used with the approval of the Chief Executive. For example:
 - 3.4.1 Questions necessary to establish if an applicant can perform an intrinsic part of the job (subject to any reasonable adjustments).
 - 3.4.2 Questions to establish if an applicant may require any reasonable adjustments to any part of the interview or selection process.
 - 3.4.3 Positive action to recruit disabled persons.
 - 3.4.4 Equal opportunities monitoring (which will not form part of the decision-making process).
 - 3.5 Applicants should not be asked about past or current pregnancy or future intentions related to pregnancy. Applicants should not be asked about matters concerning age, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, or gender reassignment.
 - 3.6 We are required by law to ensure that all employees are entitled to work in the UK. Assumptions about immigration status should not be made based on appearance or apparent nationality. All prospective staff, regardless of nationality, must be able to produce original documents (such as a passport) before employment starts, to satisfy current immigration legislation. The list of acceptable documents is available from the UK Border Agency.
 - 3.7 To ensure that this policy is operating effectively, and to identify groups that may be underrepresented or disadvantaged in our organisation, we monitor applicants' ethnic group, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion and age as part of the recruitment procedure. Provision of this information is voluntary and it will not adversely affect an individual's chances of recruitment or any other decision related to their employment. The information is removed from applications before shortlisting, and kept in an anonymised format solely for the purposes stated in this policy. Analysing this data helps us take appropriate steps to avoid discrimination and improve equality and diversity.
- 4 Staff training and promotion and conditions of service
- 4.1 Staff training needs will be identified through regular staff appraisals. All staff will be given appropriate access to training to enable them to progress within the organisation and all promotion decisions will be made on the basis of merit. Managers will be given specific training on how to manage in a way that is fair and respects diversity.
 - 4.2 Our conditions of service, benefits and facilities are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are available to all staff who should have access to them and that there are no unlawful obstacles to accessing them.
- 5 Termination of employment
- 5.1 We will ensure that redundancy criteria and procedures are fair and objective and are not directly or indirectly discriminatory.
 - 5.2 We will also ensure that disciplinary procedures and penalties are applied without discrimination, whether they result in disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other disciplinary action.

6 Disability discrimination

- 6.1 We will make reasonable adjustments for disabled staff and job applicants, as well as other disabled people with whom we may work in various capacities.
- 6.2 We will monitor the physical features of our premises to consider whether they place disabled workers, job applicants or service users at a substantial disadvantage compared to other staff. Where reasonable, we will take steps to improve access for disabled staff and service users.

7 Fixed-term employees

- 7.1 We monitor our use of fixed-term employees, and their conditions of service, to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits, training, promotion and permanent employment opportunities. We will, where relevant, monitor their progress to ensure that they are accessing permanent vacancies.

8 Part-time work

- 8.1 We monitor the conditions of service of part-time employees and their progression to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits and training and promotion opportunities. We will ensure requests to alter working hours are dealt with appropriately under our Flexible Working Policy.

9 Breaches of the policy

- 9.1 If you believe that you may have been discriminated against you are encouraged to raise the matter through our Grievance Procedure. If you believe that you may have been subject to harassment you are encouraged to raise the matter through our Dignity at Work Policy. If you are uncertain which applies or need advice on how to proceed, you should speak to your Line Manager.
- 9.2 Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure. Staff who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. False allegations which are found to have been made in bad faith will, however, be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.
- 9.3 Any member of staff who is found to have committed an act of discrimination or harassment will be subject to disciplinary action. Such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal. We take a strict approach to serious breaches of this policy.