

Fair Access and Equality & Diversity Policy

Introduction

This policy sets out OAL's commitment to ensuring in the development, delivery and award of our qualifications and end-point assessments, we adhere to the diversity and equality legislation and principles in our responsibilities as a regulated awarding organisation and end-point assessment organisation, and what we expect of our centres.

All OAL approved centres must have appropriate policies in place for approval to be granted. By accepting OAL's Approved Centre Contract, the centre confirms they will adhere to the policies they have in place.

This policy is based on the knowledge that a centre's own policies and procedures have met the centre approval criteria.

Centres are required to have in place a policy to ensure that discrimination does not occur either directly, indirectly or as a result of pressure from others, and there should be arrangements in place to monitor its application and effectiveness.

This policy outlines our approach for ensuring that OAL's qualifications and end-point assessments are accessible and do not discriminate against anyone.

OAL recognises that a commitment is not a point in time statement but a commitment to a long term and continual review of policies, practice and performance which reflects a set of underlying values which inform and guide the working practices of the organisation.

OAL fully supports the principle of equal opportunities and opposes all unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of:

- age
- ability
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marital/civil partnership status
- domestic circumstances
- pregnancy and maternity
- racial group
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation
- colour
- culture
- social background
- employment status
- or any other grounds or status

Definition

The Equality Act 2010 provides a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all. It protects individuals from various forms of discrimination and harassment.

Direct discrimination - when you are treated less favourably than another person because of your characteristic or disability.

Indirect discrimination - when a rule, policy or practice is applied to everyone, but it has a particular disadvantage to people with a characteristic or disability.

Protected characteristics - characteristics that are protected by the law.

It is unlawful to discriminate (directly or indirectly) because of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief, or because someone is married or in a civil partnership. These are known as "protected characteristics".

Roles and Responsibilities

Learners:

- Are familiar with your centre's fair access and equality, equal opportunities/equality and access to assessment policies.

Centre Tutors, Assessors and Internal Quality Assurers:

- Are familiar with and adhere to this policy and the centre's own fair access and equality, equal opportunities/equality and access to assessment policies during the development, delivery, assessment and award of OAL' qualifications.
- Ensure that all processes concerned with the development, delivery, assessment and award of OAL qualifications are carried out in a fair and objective manner.

Centre Managers:

- Ensure the centre has fair access and equality, equal opportunities/equality and access to assessment policies in place to meet OAL' centre approval requirements.
- Ensure centre staff and learners are aware of this policy and the centre's fair access and equality, equal opportunities/equality and access to assessment policies.
- Monitor centre's arrangements for fair access, equality and diversity.

External Quality Assurers (EQAs):

- Ensure OAL approved centres have in place fair access and equality, equal opportunities/equality and access to assessment policies and practices.
- Ensure that OAL approved centres have in place monitoring arrangements for fair access, equality and diversity.
- Identify issues relating to fair access, equality and diversity, particularly in the application of assessment.

End Point Assessors and Moderators

- Are familiar with and adhere to this policy during the delivery of end-point assessment of OAL's apprenticeships.
- Ensure that all processes concerned with the assessment and award of OAL end-point assessment are carried out in a fair and objective manner.

Qualifications, Products and End-Point Assessment Development Managers:

- Conduct Equality Impact Assessments on products and materials developed by the Development Team.
- Ensure language used in materials is clear, free from bias and appropriate to the target group.
- Conduct Equality Impact Assessments on assessment methods during their development.

The Awarding Organisation (Responsible Officer):

- Collect and monitor available data to detect accidental bias over time.

Qualification Development, Assessment and Quality Assurance

OAL complies with the Equality Act 2010 and will:

- Apply the fair access by design guidelines, maintained by Ofqual, in their work to ensure qualifications are designed to be as accessible as possible.
- Not discriminate, victimise, or harass any individual or groups identified within the Equality Law.
- Monitor and review the effectiveness of this policy and look for ways of improving it.
- Make this policy freely available to our staff, external contractors and Qualification Users, and publicise it clearly on OAL' website.
- Conduct Equality Impact Assessments on qualifications, assessment methods and end-point assessments during development.
- Produce materials that comply with Equality Law.
- Use language in our materials that is clear, free from bias and appropriate to the target group.
- Arrange development events for our staff and external contractors involved in the

development and quality assurance of our qualifications and end-point assessments.

- Collect and monitor available data relating to candidate achievement to detect accidental bias in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.
- Ensure our approved centres have their own fair access and equality, equal opportunities/equality and access to assessment policies.
- Monitor approved centre's adherence to their fair access and equality, equal opportunities/equality and access to assessment policies.
- Apply sanctions where centres do not conform to Equality Law.

Qualification & End-Point Assessment Development

OAL will ensure that there are no barriers or features in their qualifications, units or end-point assessments that could disadvantage any groups of learners that share a particular characteristic.

OAL ensures that at the time of developing a qualification or end-point assessment, attention is paid to the need to ensure access to learning and assessment by all learners through:

- Removing bias in content.
- Ensuring assessment methods employed do not put up unnecessary barriers to specific groups of learners.
- Ensuring new qualifications and end-point assessments are scrutinised to ensure equality of opportunity whilst ensuring that the integrity of the qualification has not been compromised.
- Ensuring materials are reviewed to ensure there is no unnecessary bias or barriers.

Assessment

We expect our approved centres to enable learners to have equal access to training and assessment for qualifications, units and end-point assessments and ensure that all processes concerned with assessment are carried out in a fair and objective manner. Assessment must be undertaken without discrimination.

Quality Assurance

We ensure through our quality assurance processes attention is paid to the need to ensure access to learning and assessment by all learners through:

- Monitoring assessment materials.
- Offering special arrangements to learners, who may not be able to fully demonstrate their abilities in prescribed assessment situations, provided that this does not unreasonably affect the standards and outcome of the assessment.
- Monitoring all complaints, enquiries and appeals that may suggest discriminatory practice.

Occupational Awards Responsibilities

The Responsible Officer is accountable for ensuring the implementation of this policy. The Operations & Quality – Senior Manager is responsible for carrying out the requirements of this policy.

Contact Details

If you have any queries about the contents of this policy, please contact our Quality Team on:

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