

TITLE: Equality and Diversity	REF: HSA004	VERSION: 4
APPROVAL BODY: MD	DATE: 01.10.2020	REVIEW: 04.03.2025
LEAD PERSON: MD		
VERSION	REVIEWER/APPROVAL SIGNATURE	REVIEW NOTES
Version 1 - 01.10.2020	<i>John Pitchforth</i>	On behalf of the Leadership Team
Version 2 - 19.05.2021	<i>John Pitchforth</i>	On behalf of the Leadership Team
Version 3 - 31.01.2025	<i>John Pitchforth</i>	On behalf of the Leadership Team
Version 4 – 04.03.2025	<i>John Pitchforth</i>	On behalf of the Leadership Team

Equality and Diversity Policy

Policy Statement

Heritage Skills Academy are committed to providing equal opportunities for all and believe that individuals have an equal right to work and learn in an environment where they are treated with respect and dignity, free from discrimination regardless of their protected characteristics.

Heritage Skills Academy is committed to offering opportunities to all individuals based solely on competence and individual merit, and not on any irrelevant factor such as age, sex, gender re-assignment, sexual orientation, race, creed, colour, nationality, disability, background, or social or marital status.

All employees have a duty to promote, comply and engage with the equality and diversity policy and single equality plan throughout the duration of their employment with the company to ensure compliance of legislation.

All new staff will be familiarised with the Equality and Diversity policy as part of their induction process. All staff will participate in regular training to ensure they keep up to date with current legislation, policy changes and how they are implemented.

Equality and diversity are a central theme and formal element of the interview and recruitment process for both applicants and employers.

Policy Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to set out the expectations of equality and diversity. This policy provides guidance on our key principles in relation to equality and diversity within the company, across the delivery of learning and with all clients, suppliers and any individual who encounters Heritage Skills Academy.

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1. Aim

- No applicant, apprentice, employee or customer will receive less favourable treatment or be subjected to any form of discrimination.
- All apprentices, employees and customers will be given the help they need to attain their full potential wherever that is possible.
- We secure the best employees and apprentices for our needs by accessing all sections of the community.
- We achieve an ability-based workforce that is in line with the working population mix.

2. Definitions

The policy applies to the following key areas:

- Recruitment
- Working conditions
- Training
- Promotion
- Delivery of learning

3. Legislation and statutory requirements

This policy will be implemented within the framework of the relevant legislation, which includes:

- Equality Act 2010
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Human Rights Act 1998

The categories of discrimination as listed in the Equality Act 2010 are:

- **Direct Discrimination** – where a person is treated less favourable than another because of a protected characteristic
- **Indirect discrimination** – where a provision, criterion or practice is applied that is discriminatory in relation to individuals who have relevant protected characteristics such that would be to the detriment of people who share that protected characteristic compared

with people who do not and it cannot be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

- **Harassment** – where there is unwanted conduct, related to one of the protected characteristics that has purpose or effect of violating a person’s dignity; or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Harassment may apply either directly or indirectly to an applicant, and apprentice, staff, employers or others associated with the business because of one of the protected characteristics.
- **Associative Discrimination** – where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed for association with another individual who has a protected characteristic
- **Perception discrimination** – where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed based on a perception that they have a particular characteristic which they do not have.
- **Victimisation** – where an employee is subjected to a detriment, such as being denied a training opportunity or a promotion because they made or supported a complain or raised a grievance or because are suspected of doing so. However, an employee or apprentice is not protected from victimisation if they have acted maliciously or made or supported and untrue complaint.

4. Protected Characteristics

For the purpose of this policy, “protected characteristics” shall mean:

- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion and Beliefs
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Age
- Marriage and Civil Partnership

5. Employee and Apprentice Recruitment

Advertising

All jobs and opportunities will be advertised as widely as is reasonably practicable, to ensure that applicants come forward from a wide variety of back grounds and walks of life.

The company will not restrict the advertising of any job or position to any publication, place or medium which would exclude or disproportionately reduce applicants from any particular gender or age group, or from persons of a particular marital status.

No job or opportunity will be advertised in such a way, or with such requirements or prerequisites that it shall exclude or discourage applicants from any gender or age group, or from persons of a marital status.

Short-listing

When short listing applicants for interviews or opportunities, Heritage Skills Academy will take into consideration only the applicant's qualifications, experience, and suitability for the role.

Names, ages, dates of birth and other irrelevant information should be obscured or removed from application forms prior to short-listing to avoid inadvertent or unintentional discrimination.

Interview

Interviewers will not ask questions which relate to any protected characteristic.

Interviewers will ask all applicants the same set of questions to ensure equal treatment as far as possible.

Where an applicant identifies themselves as having a disability, Heritage Skills Academy will make all necessary adjustments to accommodate at the interview.

Selection

Clear and consistent selection criteria and scoring grids should be used.

Selection should be based solely on merit and the ability of the individual to do the job.

6. Delivery of Learning

- All employees within the organisation, whether in direct delivery of learning or otherwise must adhere to the policy when carrying out their job role and conduct out of business hours as a representative of the company.
- Delivery personnel will continue to refresh equality and diversity knowledge through training provided by the company including short courses, induction, standardisation, and team meetings and through directed or self-study.
- All delivery personnel will continue to promote equality and diversity through learning sessions both in centre and within the workplace. Visit progress records must be completed each month by the individual tutor, documenting in the relevant sections the learning and embedding of this policy and library of resources.
- Delivery personnel must continue to embed the British values throughout the duration of the learners' programme and throughout communication with any individual in relation to the company.
- Delivery personnel will always continue to set the exemplary standards and demonstrate absolute respect, fairness and supporting the company principles of embracing differences and ensuring all learners excel in their personal and professional development regardless of any of the protected characteristics.

7. Additional Promotion

- Heritage Skills Academy will continue to promote the policy through associated materials and visuals displayed throughout the learning centre and through the library of learning resources used in the delivery of learning.
- Tutors will continue to monitor appropriate usage of IT systems within centre-based delivery and promote the policy to learners prior to the delivery and usage of systems. Full compliance of the policy and legal consequences of abuse in any of the protected characteristic to be embedded throughout delivery of IT usage. Learners must be reminded of the British values and the expectation of their conduct prior to usage of IT systems.
- All employees within the business, extending to individuals supporting the company either through work experience or short-term project, will be made aware of the requirements of the policy and others as part of employee induction training.
- In addition to the above, the equality and diversity policy will be promoted through:
- Company website www.heritageskillsacademy.co.uk
 - Enrolment inductions
 - E-portfolio systems

8. Working and Learning Environment

The working environment, terms of service or rate of pay of any individuals directly employed by Heritage Skills Academy shall be determined solely with reference to qualifications, experience, the job role undertaken, and the conditions enjoyed by other staff of the same grade. No protected characteristics shall be used as a pretext or motivation to treat an employee in any way differently from any other colleagues.

9. Training

All individuals directly employed by Heritage Skills Academy shall be entitled to training or career development opportunities in line with their colleagues at the same level, who undertake a substantially similar job role.

No employee shall be denied training or career development opportunities for any reason relating to protected characteristics.

10. Grievances

Where any individual directly employed by Heritage Skills Academy feels that they, an apprentice, or one of their colleagues has been treated in a way which breaches this policy, they shall be entitled to bring a formal complaint under Heritage Skills Academy complaints policy.

11. Support and Guidance

For further guidance, clarity, or support in implementing this policy, please contact the designated contact John Pitchforth, john.pitchforth@heritageskillsacademy.co.uk

12. Commitment

All employees are required to adhere to the equality and diversity policy and all other associated policies throughout the duration of their employment.

This policy applies to all aspects services delivered by Heritage Skills Academy including recruitment and training.

Employees are fully committed to the policy and adhere to requirements both when representing the company otherwise and understand that by not complying with the policy either in part or whole could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

All apprentices and employers commit to adhere to this policy.

13. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed by the Managing Director at least annually. At every review, it will be approved by the *Senior Management Team*.