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1 HR1.2 IE Equality and Diversity Policy

1.1 Introduction

Cenit College are committed to fostering a culture of equality, diversity, and inclusion in all aspects of our organisation. We believe that embracing and valuing individual differences enhances creativity, innovation, and overall success. This policy outlines our commitment to providing a fair, respectful, and inclusive environment where all individuals are treated with dignity and have equal opportunities, regardless of their background, identity, or personal characteristics.

1.2 Policy Owner

The policy owner is the Board of Directors.

1.3 Purpose

The overall purpose of this policy is to promote equality of opportunity for learners and staff. In doing so Cenit will ensure that all practises are operated on the principals of merit, ability and suitability. Cenit College is committed to respecting equality and diversity amongst its staff, learners and all its other stakeholders. Cenit College values and recognises difference in our learners, staff and those that we represent. Equality, diversity and inclusion are woven through all we do and are fully represented in all our policies and activities. Mutual respect, inclusion and equal opportunities form part of our values.

1.4 Scope

This policy applies to;

- (i) All Cenit College staff – temporary, part time and full time.
- (ii) All learners

All staff and learners must, in accordance with this policy, treat each other with dignity at all times and not to discriminate against or harass each other. Cenit College expects all staff and learners to familiarise themselves with this policy and to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner at all times. Any breach of this policy is subject to Cenit College disciplinary procedures.

1.5 Policy Statement

Cenit College is an equal opportunities employer and aims to promote a culture of fairness, transparency and equality at all times. It seeks to promote an inclusive environment that values diversity and inclusion, where dignity and respect is maintained. We recognise our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and, as a provider of Government contracts, the related Public Sector Equality Duty. We are committed to eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering good relations between people with different protected characteristics and those that do not. In line with the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023, Cenit takes proactive and proportionate steps to prevent sexual harassment and other unlawful conduct at work, promoting a culture where inappropriate behaviour is challenged and addressed.

No learner or staff member will be treated less favourably than another in a similar situation – with specific consideration given to age; disability; race; religion; civil status; family status; gender; sexual orientation; or membership of ethnic groups. All policies developed by Cenit College will ensure that the principals of equality, diversity and inclusion are included.

The commitment Cenit College has to this policy and equality, diversity and inclusion is supported through the following actions:

- ensure this policy is available to all staff and learners;
- actively encouraging equality of opportunity and respect for diversity;
- seek to eliminate discrimination, including harassment and bullying;
- ensure this policy reflects all current legislation on equality, diversity and inclusion
- ensure college reports and activities reference our initiatives to promote equal opportunity, diversity and inclusion
- regularly review this policy

2 Definitions Responsibilities

2.1 Definitions

Equality

Ensuring all individuals have equal access to opportunities, services, and employment, and are not treated less favourably on any of the nine protected grounds set out in Irish law.

Equity

Recognising that individuals have different needs and providing appropriate supports or adjustments to achieve fair outcomes.

Diversity

The range of differences among individuals, including those protected under Irish equality legislation, as well as differences in background, experience, and perspectives.

Inclusion

Creating an environment where everyone feels respected, valued, and able to participate fully, regardless of their identity or circumstances.

Discrimination

Less favourable treatment of a person compared to another person in a similar situation on any of the nine protected grounds. This includes:

- Direct discrimination
- Indirect discrimination
- Discrimination by association

Harassment

Any form of unwanted conduct related to one of the nine grounds that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment.

Sexual Harassment

Any unwanted verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature that violates a person's dignity.

Victimisation

Unfair treatment of an individual because they have made, supported, or been involved in a complaint related to discrimination.

Reasonable Accommodation

Steps taken to meet the needs of a person with a disability, by modifying the workplace or practices, without imposing a disproportionate burden on the organisation.

Bullying

Repeated inappropriate behaviour—direct or indirect—that undermines a person’s dignity at work (while not always linked to a protected ground, it is often addressed alongside EDI).

Protected characteristics refer to the specific personal attributes or grounds under Irish equality law on which discrimination is prohibited. Under the Employment Equality Acts 1998–2015 and the Equal Status Acts 2000–2018, individuals are protected from discrimination based on the following nine grounds:

- Gender
- Civil status
- Family status
- Sexual orientation
- Religion
- Age
- Disability
- Race (including colour, nationality, or ethnic/national origins)
- Membership of the Traveller community

2.2 Responsibilities

Board of Directors: Ensuring that this policy reflects all relevant legislation

- To oversee and monitor the effectiveness of this Policy and ensure that it is being implemented in an effective and efficient manner throughout the organisation.

Senior Managers, Line Managers: Implementation of this policy amongst their staff

Tutors: Ensuring all learners understand this policy and activity promote a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion in the classroom or online.

3 Procedures/Principles

3.1 Principles

We promote an inclusive culture that values differences, enables everyone to contribute and supports our ability to attract, develop, retain, and engage people from a wide range of backgrounds. We have zero tolerance for discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, bullying, or victimisation. This applies across all aspects of employment, including recruitment, terms and conditions, pay, training and development, performance management, promotion, flexible working, and the handling of grievances and disciplinary matters.

3.2 Procedures

Any staff member or learner who wishes to raise issues concerning alleged discrimination should do so, in the first instance by contacting:

- Staff: relevant Line Manager or Human Resources
- Learner: Tutor or Programme Coordinator

Alternatively, any staff, student or stakeholder can contact Cenit College through the following email address:

equality@cenitcollege.ie

A member of staff will be on contact to liaise on the equality matter in question.

3.2.1 Communications

Materials produced by Cenit College will be provided in a relevant and accessible manner to students, staff and relevant stakeholders across the nine equality grounds.

All advertising and marketing strategies along with ensuring publications and media will be non-discriminatory and reflect Cenit Colleges commitment to equality and diversity.

Cenit College will ensure that other companies for which it receives goods and services are aware of this policy and are expected to comply with it. All Cenit College business contracts will reflect this requirement. Breach of this policy will constitute grounds to suspend the contract.

3.2.2 Equity of Service Provision

Learners: Cenit College will ensure equality of access and opportunity for learners and will ensure that all its processes (admission, assessment etc) do not discriminate against any learner on the nine grounds – formally or informally. This applies to the online and classroom environments.

Cenit College will seek to accommodate the diversity of learners, staff and stakeholders from across the nine equality grounds and other under-represented groups by:

- Providing reasonable accommodation for learners, staff and other stakeholders with disabilities and providing integrated access to services where practicable.
- Identifying and addressing learner, staff and stakeholder needs across the nine grounds and from other under-represented groups. This is achieved through feedback and consultation.
- Exploring barriers to participation for learners, staff and stakeholders.
- Taking positive action measures to promote equality of opportunity for disadvantaged persons where necessary.
- Ensuring flexibility in the operation of systems and services.
- Embedding inclusiveness within all activities and academic practices.

3.2.3 Equality in Employment

Human Resources will have a responsibility to ensure that this policy applies to recruitment and selection, advertising, interviews, training and development and progression and any other area of its operations.

3.2.4 Recruitment

In relation to recruitment Cenit College will;

- Ensure all recruitment activity is inclusive and does not discriminate on the nine grounds;
- No applicant for a position is discriminated in relation to any of the nine equality grounds;
- All applicants are selected on the basis of merit – thus ensuring the most suitable candidate is chosen for the position;
- Ensure no barriers based on the nine grounds are created that impede a candidate from applying for a position;
- Ensure transparency of recruitment procedures;
- Seek feedback on the recruitment process.

3.2.5 Advertising

- Ensure that the advertisement and job description does not unfairly exclude an applicant in relation to the nine grounds.
- Ensure that advertisements are promoted so that they reach all candidates across all nine equality grounds. This can be achieved by advertising in a variety of media and not limiting online advertising to exclude on the nine grounds.

3.2.6 Interviews

Cenit College ensures that;

- All members of its interview panel have had training in equality and diversity and are familiar with this policy;
- Members of the interview panel will use an interview rating system that ensures equality;
- Any candidate who discloses a disability will be provided with reasonable accommodation.

3.2.7 Training and Development

Cenit College will ensure that;

- All employees will have equal opportunity to training and development;
- All programmes provided are inclusive and accommodate the diversity of staff.

3.2.8 Progression

Cenit College will ensure that all staff have equal access to progression opportunities. Specifically, the college will ensure that;

- The promotional process and outcomes are monitored regarding gender (and other equality criteria).
- All barriers to progression are removed in particular for groups of staff under the nine equality grounds, and where appropriate implement measures to redress imbalances.

4 Monitoring and Review

The administration and co-ordination of Equality rests with Cenit College Management Board, Academic Committee and the Head of Training. Our Quality Assurance department is responsible for overseeing the quality of the process and its relevant policies and procedures.

There will be a formal review of this Policy by the Management Board to reflect any changes in legislation or the needs of the college. Should any changes arise, the Head of Quality will be informed and will update the policy document accordingly.

Monitoring methods will include any breaches of this policy and ensuing disciplinary procedures, review of all QA documentation and annual programme monitoring reports.

Information on the Cenit College Learner Management System and Administration system is updated and monitored on a frequent basis. Each Programme lead is responsible for their own programme with the Training Manager having responsibility for oversight.

5 References and related policies

This policy is guided by the following legislation and statutory instruments;

- Employment Equality Act, 1998;
- Equality Act 2004;
- Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2011;
- Equality (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2015;
- Pensions Act, 1990;
- Social Welfare (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2004
- SI 208 of 2012 - Employment Equality Act 1998 (Code of Practice) (Harassment) Order 2012
- SI 321 of 1999 - Employment Equality Act, 1998 (Section 76 - Right To Information) Regulations, 1999
- Seetec Equality and diversity policy v4.1

6 Version Control

Version	Date	Description	Originator	Approved by
1	25/01/2021	New QA system	Perri Williams (QA)	
	26/01/2021	Approval	Perri Williams (QA)	Management Board
2	18/06/2026	Policy formatted to standardised policy template. Any references to out of date job roles have been updated. Section 1.1 new Introduction added Section 1.2 Clear ownership of policy lies with Borad of Directors	HoQ	Board of Direcotrs

		Section 1.5 new statement added in relation to Equality Act 2010 and 2023 amendment Section 2.1 new section of definitions including protected characteristics Section 5 new references and related policies added		
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