



Equal Opportunities Policy

Version 2 – January 2022

Equal Opportunities and Anti-Harassment Policy

Policy

The Institute of Animal Technology as a Professional Body is fully committed to developing, maintaining and supporting a culture of equality and diversity where all stakeholders, members, guests and other publics will be treated fairly and with dignity and respect and wholeheartedly supports the principle of equal opportunities in employment, education and training. The Institute is committed to the elimination of discrimination on the grounds of sex, marital status, sexual orientation, race, colour, nationality, creed, or religious belief, ethnic or national origins, age and disability.

The Institute is committed to establishing and maintaining an education process that will not tolerate either direct or indirect discrimination.

The Institute will meet the requirements of all current legislation.

Scope and Objective

The Institute will:

- Make its equal opportunities policy available to all centres and learners
- Ensure its qualifications have been subject to an open and clearly defined validation process
- Develop assessment criteria and learning outcomes that avoid direct or indirect discrimination, within the confines of established standards of animal welfare and with regard to any legal constraints under the animals (scientific procedures) act or other animal welfare legislation
- Ensure that institute policies promote fair access to qualifications
- Provide guidance for those learners who think that they have been treated unfairly or have been discriminated against
- Ensure that all publications and promotional literature are written clearly and are designed to be as inclusive as possible
- Review the effectiveness of policies on a regular basis and take prompt action to rectify any deficiencies that are identified, and communicate this action to the centres and learners
- Consult with learners, employers and industry to ensure its units and qualifications are accessible to learners and will identify actual or potential barriers to learner participation

Procedure

- When teaching and assessing Centres should:
- Promote positive examples of role models from across the demographic make-up of the learner cohort and not simply use a single sex or ethnic group as examples
- Avoid using stereotypes
- Devise assessments that are sensitive to the cultural and demographic make-up of the learner cohort

- Avoid the use of racially sensitive words or examples
- Ensure that all learners have equal access to practical activities
- Report actual or potential barriers to learner participation or achievement to their IAT Moderator

Direct Discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than others on grounds of sex, marital status, sexual orientation, race, colour, nationality, creed, or religious belief, ethnic or national origins, age and people with health conditions or impairments requiring additional needs.

Direct discrimination is not acceptable. Assessors and moderators should take steps to ensure that the examination process is run in a fair way that assesses learners against the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria, free from innuendo or bias due to any other factor. Examples of direct discrimination would include treating learners differently because of their ethnic origin or gender.

Indirect Discrimination

Indirect discrimination occurs where policies or procedures that apply to everyone disproportionately effect a person or group on the grounds of sex, marital status, sexual orientation, race, colour, nationality, creed, or religious belief, ethnic or national origins, age and disability. During regular reviews of the educational system the Institute will take careful note of the effectiveness of its policies and procedures and will evaluate the effect of these policies and procedures on learners.

Bullying and Harassment

In addition to its stated policies on equal opportunities the Institute will not tolerate bullying or harassment within the education process. Bullying is defined as using a position of strength to persecute or intimidate any person or group. Harassment is the unwanted and unwelcome behaviour that is regarded as offensive or intimidating by the recipient and is not justified by the professional or working relationship. Harassment can be physical, verbal, or non-verbal. Harassment and bullying may take many forms and include violence, threats, jokes, offensive language, pestering and isolation. It would also include malicious or vexatious claims or accusations.

All accusations of bullying or harassment will be taken seriously by the Institute and are subject to the complaints procedure. Bullying or harassment of the Institute's officials will be thoroughly investigated by the Institute and where an individual or group is found to have bullied or harassed an official(s), they will be barred from any further involvement in the education process.

Reporting Responsibilities

As Centres have the most regular direct contact with learners and are actively involved in recruiting and registering learners, they have a responsibility to inform the IAT of any common issues or problems which appear to limit the access of learners to IAT units or qualifications.

The IAT Moderator will review and investigate any apparent barriers to learners either registering or successfully completing their units or qualifications and will report back to the Chair of the Board of Education. Where barriers are identified, and subject to maintaining appropriate professional standards and ensuring that all legal and animal welfare obligations are met, the Board of Educational Policy will act on the advice of the Chair of the Board of Education to make appropriate adjustments to their policies and procedures to ensure that any barriers are minimised, and where possible removed completely.

Learners have a responsibility to report issues of access or barriers to successful achievement of IAT units or qualifications to the Centre or the IAT Moderator.

Investigation Procedures

When a report is made as outlined above, the Institute will undertake a prompt investigation as may be appropriate under all of the circumstances. During an investigation, involved individuals are expected to co-operate and provide truthful information. The steps to be taken during the investigation cannot be fixed in advance but will vary depending upon the nature of the allegations. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the investigative process where extent practical and consistent with the Institute's legal obligation to undertake a full investigation. There may be instances in which an individual reporting discriminatory harassment seeks only to discuss the matter informally and does not wish the Institute to undertake an investigation or to take further steps. While the Institute will attempt to honour the person's wishes, the law generally requires that the organisation conduct an official investigation.

Policy against Victimisation

The Institute will not victimise anyone who complains in good faith about alleged discrimination or discriminatory harassment according to the procedure set out in this Policy. Victimisation will constitute a serious breach of this Policy and must be reported immediately. The reporting and investigation of allegations of victimisation will follow the procedures detailed in this Policy. Any person found to have victimised an individual for complaining about alleged discrimination or discriminatory harassment will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

Appeals Process

If either party directly involved in discrimination or discriminatory harassment investigation is dissatisfied with the outcome, that individual has the right to appeal the decision. The dissatisfied party should submit an appeal with written comments in a timely manner to the Hon. Secretary of the IAT Council.

The appealing party's position will be reviewed along with the complete record of the matter and findings will be issued where possible within 15 working days of the receipt of the written appeal, unless it is determined that additional investigation is appropriate.

Monitoring Access and Achievement

The IAT will evaluate registration details and learner achievements to ensure that barriers to learner participation and achievement are identified and can be acted upon effectively. The IAT will also consult on a regular basis with learners, employers and the wider industry to ensure that the qualifications meet the needs of the learner and the employer. These consultations are used alongside the registration data to ensure that access to IAT qualifications reflects the membership demographics. Annual comparison of learner and membership demographics allows trends to be monitored.

Learner participation and achievement is published at the Annual General Meeting and in the IAT Bulletin.