

POL05 – Equality & Diversity Policy

1. Purpose

RPD aims to be a fair and equitable employer and to provide its staff with excellent personal development opportunities in support of our vision, values and objectives and their own career aspirations.

2. Introduction

As an equal opportunity employer, RPD actively fosters equality & diversity.

All staff, customers, apprentices, and stakeholders must feel confident, and assured, that RPD is committed to equality and diversity across its service and the lifecycle of the qualifications it delivers (design/development, delivery, award, and ongoing quality assurance).

For this reason, we are actively:

- ensure equality of opportunity in employment and access to services for all who work for, or with, RPD
- provide training for all staff on equality and diversity (mandatory when inducting new staff)
- create an environment, and ethos, of respect, dignity, value, and tolerance that is free of stereotypes, prejudice, harassment, victimisation, or discrimination
- promote equality and diversity for all, including staff, apprentices, employers, training providers, stakeholders, and third parties who have direct or indirect contact with RPD
- work to eliminate unlawful direct and indirect discrimination
- support staff and freelance/contractors to challenge any inappropriate, violent, or abusive behaviour from colleagues, customers, or stakeholders.

3. Legislation and Regulation

RPD is committed to the implementation of the Equality Act 2010 across our service.

RPD is also required to comply with ESFA Conditions for EPAOs, and by Ofqual's General Conditions in relation to equality and diversity, in particular:

A1.2 Ensuring all senior officers have not been held by a court or any professional, regulatory, or government body to have breached any provision of Equalities Law

B1.3 and D2.1 – ensuring all its qualifications (end-point assessments) comply with Equalities Law

G6.1 – operating a reasonable adjustment policy in line with the requirements of Equalities Law, have in place clear arrangements for making Reasonable Adjustments in relation to qualifications which it makes available.

D1.2 - ensuring qualification are fit for purpose, which includes minimising bias

4. Related Policies

POL06 Reasonable adjustments and Special considerations policy

POL09 Conflict of Interest Policy

POL11 Safeguarding

POL16 IT Strategy (including data protection)

POL02 Code of Conduct Policy.

5. Definitions

Equality is about ensuring everybody has an equal opportunity, and is not treated differently or discriminated against because of their characteristics¹

Equality of opportunity is about ensuring everybody has an equal chance to take up opportunities and to make full use of the opportunities on offer and to fulfil their potential.

Diversity is about taking account of the differences between people and groups of people, and recognising, valuing those differences to create a productive effective workforce. This may be based upon protected characteristics, but also upon the wide range of knowledge, skills and experience of the individuals and groups. It is strongly linked with promoting human rights and freedoms, based on principles such as dignity and respect.

6. Limitations

RPD do not recruit any of the apprentices, they are recruited by employers. This means that we cannot influence the diversity of apprentices, but we can monitor our practices to ensure equality and diversity applies to all the assessments we design and deliver, so that all apprentices subject to assessment are treated the same.

7. Responsibilities

HR	<p>ensuring that the procedures for the recruitment of staff at all times comply with equal opportunities legislation, the RPD policy, and promote and support equality of opportunity</p> <p>monitoring and analysing employee equality related data</p> <p>sourcing appropriate training on equality and diversity for all staff</p> <p>ensuring the disciplinary procedures make provision non-compliance with the Equality and Diversity Policy</p> <p>making sure that existing staff within the protected characteristics will be encouraged to compete for appointments and promotions</p>
All staff (employed or contracted)	<p>Abide by the Equality and Diversity Policy</p> <p>treat everyone with respect, dignity and understanding</p> <p>use appropriate language and behaviour</p>

¹ There are nine protected characteristics, that are central to the equality agenda: Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Marriage & civil partnership, Pregnancy & maternity, Race (nationality & colour), Religion or belief, Sex, Sexual orientation

	<p>Engage actively in CPD related to equality and diversity</p> <p>Act and operate with integrity and without conflict of interest</p> <p>Report any concerns they may have</p>
Learners / Apprentices (apprentices)	<p>treating everyone fairly and with respect</p> <p>Abide by the Equality and Diversity Policy</p> <p>Use appropriate language and behaviour</p> <p>Report any concerns they may have</p>
Governing Body	<p>taking the lead in creating a positive, inclusive ethos that challenges discriminatory behaviour</p> <p>ensuring that the Business Development Plan and quality assurance policy includes a commitment to, and monitoring of Equality and Diversity</p> <p>acting where required on the results of the equality and diversity data monitoring</p>
EPA Subcommittee	<p>ensuring that the EPA service meets all the requirements of the Equality Act 2010</p> <p>ensuring that the policy is adhered to across the design / development, delivery, and award functions of the EPA service</p> <p>promoting Equality and Diversity within RPD and externally</p> <p>leading the annual (and any interim) reviews of the policy</p> <p>monitoring data on equality and diversity and reporting to the governing body</p> <p>ensuring that all marketing and EPA information promotes equality of opportunity, are free from explicit or implicit unfair discrimination, challenge stereotypes and promote inclusion and diversity</p> <p>ensuring that assessment and marketing materials are available in alternative format where required</p>
IQA	<p>Ensuring IQA sampling includes sampling of protected characteristic groups</p> <p>Monitoring and observing equality practice of assessors when assessing</p> <p>Arrange equality audits and carry out equality impact assessments for any new proposed developments, including assessment tools</p>
Assessors	<p>Assessing without bias</p> <p>Treating all apprentice equally</p>

8. Equality and Diversity Impact Assessments

RPD uses equality impact assessments (EDIAs) to ensure that equality and inclusion is embedded in the design, development, delivery, award, and review of the end-point assessment service. The EDIA is included in the question development template forms and captured when undertaking Internal Quality Assurance activities.

They will be led by an RPD IQA person and will report to the EPA Subcommittee who will determine next steps. They cover policies, procedures, assessment tools and materials of the end-point assessment service and is designed to assess the impact of a new or amended policy / procedure / process / assessment tool or material, in a transparent manner.

Its purpose is to:

- prevent discrimination
- identify potential / actual adverse impacts and actions remove or mitigate them
- identify opportunities to promote equality that may have previously been missed or could be better used
- identify adaptations to provision to create equality of access and opportunity without impacting reliability and validity
- identify areas where support or guidance may be required
- The impact assessment will encompass review and checks for:

Discrimination - where someone could be treated less favourably or put at a disadvantage because of their protected characteristic (Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Marriage & civil partnership, Pregnancy & maternity, Race (nationality & colour), Religion or belief, Gender, Sexual orientation).

Bias –

- Design - where there may be bias in how assessments are designed, or example poor use of grammar or language.
- Delivery - where the assessment tools or guidance may run the risk of assessor delivering in a biased (conscious or unconscious) manner

Barriers –

- design – checking the formats are accessible and adaptable.
- delivery – checking assessments and activities can be adapted for reasonable adjustments without impacting the robustness or validity of the assessment

The impact assessment will also identify the measures that can be put in place to eliminate or manage any risks of discrimination, which may be an amendment to a policy, or a complete redesign.

9. Monitoring equality and diversity

RPD will utilise data and feedback to inform the monitoring of the equality and diversity policy, and therefore how to continuously improve. But it will also enable us to identify where there may have been adverse effects, and to take action, including reporting to the regulator.

Data and feedback will show, for example:

The diversity of staff (currently employed and recruitment selection)

The results of apprentices based on protected characteristic (where known), age, and gender

We cannot mandate the collection of data about protected characteristics and as such data analysis may be limited

The types of complaints and appeals, and their outcomes – are any related to bias or discrimination

Reasonable adjustments – have there been requests for reasonable adjustments for activities that should not have required a reasonable adjustment if they had been designed with equality and accessibility in mind

The views of customers and stakeholders on our systems, policies, and procedures

Monitoring reports will be produced for the EPA Subcommittee by an RPD IQA person, for discussion, scrutiny, and decision on next steps, including the upward reporting to the Governing Body. Further details of monitoring can be found in our quality assurance documents (document OP33 – End point Assessment Procedure).