

Equal Opportunities Procedure (Staff)

[QP2.19]

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1.0 Aim

The Adam Smith College, Fife, is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all employed in its service, and that all staff are recruited, trained and promoted on the basis of their ability, their suitability for work, and the requirements of the job. No job applicant or member of staff shall receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of:

- Race
- Sex
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Marital or civil partnership status
- Age
- Disability
- Political beliefs
- Religious or other similar beliefs
- Social background.

This procedure has been prepared (and jointly agreed with the recognised trade unions) in order to provide guidance to all staff on the implementation of Equal Opportunity. It applies to all staff whether permanent full-time, part time, or temporary, and applies to all applicants for such posts.

It is the responsibility of all staff in carrying out their normal duties to ensure compliance with the terms of the policy and to adopt a positive attitude towards equality of opportunity.

2.0 Recruitment and Promotion

- 2.1 The selection of staff for recruitment or promotion shall be based on objective criteria related to the job requirements. The criteria used in selection shall only be those that are necessary and justifiable for the effective performance of the job and they shall be applied consistently to all applicants. Applicants shall not be rejected on the basis of criteria which are merely convenient as opposed to being essential for the post, as this may constitute indirect discrimination. Indirect discrimination occurs when selection criteria are used which are not strictly essential and which in practice discriminate against one group.
- 2.2 Those responsible for selection must guard against assumptions based upon an individual's:
- Race - including ethnic origin, colour, nationality, and national origin
 - Gender

- Gender reassignment
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Sexual orientation
- Age
- Disability
- Religion or belief
- Political beliefs
- Social background
- Trade union membership
- Responsibility for dependants or employment status

Examples of such assumptions would be that a given individual would:-

- (a) Have outside commitments that would interfere with work, OR
- (b) Not be able to cope with a physically strenuous job, OR
- (c) Produce an unfavourable reaction from the public or other staff, OR
- (d) Have an unacceptably high incidence of sickness, OR
- (e) Possess limited career ambitions, OR
- (f) Lack commitment to work.

Questions asked at interview should relate to the requirements of the post and the information contained in the individual application and a similar range of questions should be put to all applicants. In particular, questions related to health must only be asked of the successful candidate unless a certain level of fitness, for example, is intrinsic to the job when similar information should be sought from all candidates.

- 2.3 Vacancies shall be advertised internally for staff who are likely to possess appropriate qualifications or have relevant experience, and where appropriate shall be advertised in external media as well as being issued to local ethnic minorities and organisations involved with people with the protected characteristics, for example, minority ethnic communities and disabled people. Information contained in advertisements shall be that derived from the person specification and shall contain only criteria and information directly related to the position.

Applicants shall be given sufficiently clear and accurate information through advertisements, job descriptions and interviews to enable them to assess their own suitability for a post. Recruitment literature shall not imply there is a preference for one group of applicants unless there is an occupational requirement which limits the post to a particular group, in which case this must be clearly stated. The existence of any occupational requirement shall be reviewed on each occasion the post falls vacant. The College will also consider positive

action initiatives where there is a clear under-representation of one group within the staff complement, for example, male lecturers in traditionally female subjects and vice versa.

The College has been awarded the Two Ticks disability symbol and this will be placed on all adverts. All disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for a job vacancy will be interviewed and considered on their abilities.

- 2.4 In the event of a complaint of discrimination, the HR Manager or their representative or other person responsible for the selection decision will be expected to state the criteria on which the decision was based and to demonstrate that the person appointed was the applicant who best met those criteria. Records should be kept of selection interviews indicating not only the reasons for selection of the successful candidate, but also of the reasons for non-selection of the remaining applicants for the post. Recruitment information is kept for a period of 6 months, as per Data Protection Act guidelines.
- 2.5 Where there is doubt about the suitability of a candidate for employment due to a disability, further advice should be sought from the College's Medical Adviser and also about the availability of aids in employment or adaptation of buildings before a decision to reject is taken.

For further details on recruitment, please refer to the Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure.

3.0 During Employment

- 3.1 The Adam Smith College, Fife shall apply conditions of employment fairly to all staff without discrimination on the basis of race, sex, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, age disability, political beliefs, religious or other similar beliefs or social background.
- 3.2 The College is committed to ensuring that no member of staff receives less favourable treatment in any aspect of their employment on the basis of any of the protected characteristics listed above.
- 3.3 The College is committed to ensuring that existing staff who become disabled during their period of service at the College will be supported and every effort will be made to enable them to remain at work.
- 3.4 The College will ensure that it reviews its pay policies regularly and monitors the pay levels of staff to ensure equal pay across all of the protected characteristics.

4.0 Training and Induction

The College will ensure that all staff know and understand what it means to be an equal opportunity organisation. The College will provide Induction Training for all new staff, and as part of the Induction Programme the importance of Equal Opportunities will be emphasised.

To reinforce the importance and benefits of a positive approach to Equal Opportunities the College will ensure that it is embedded into all appropriate training and development activities.

Facilities for further training and for personal development shall be made available to staff based on the needs of each individual in relation to their role and responsibilities and in accordance with the Staff Development Calendar. This criteria will not discriminate against staff on any of the grounds outlined in section (2.2).

Specific Diversity Training courses and 'HR issues' training courses will be offered through out the year to increase staff awareness of Equal Opportunities and Diversity issues.

5.0 Implementation of the Equal Opportunity Policy

5.1 The HR Manager shall be responsible for:-

- (a) Communication of the Policy & Procedure to Managers, Directors and recognised Trade Unions.
- (b) Organisation of training to promote good recruitment practice and to make participants aware of the forms in which discrimination can occur.
- (c) Providing advice on appropriate levels of entry qualifications.

5.2 Directors and Managers shall be responsible for:-

- (a) Communication of the policy to all staff within their Institute/Centre/Teams and ensuring that staff comply with the policy.
- (b) Identification of training needs of staff involved in recruitment and selection.
- (c) Investigation of specific complaints of discrimination or of discriminatory practice.

- 5.3 Principals Group and Board of Governors shall have overriding responsibility for:-
- (a) Ensuring that the Equal Opportunity policy & procedure is communicated, understood and adhered to throughout the College.
- 5.4 Complaints of discrimination from employees shall be considered in accordance with the provisions of the College's *Grievance Procedure*. Complaints from candidates for employment shall be handled in a similar way, and in particular complainants shall be advised that if they are not satisfied with the initial response, their complaint may be considered by the Director of HR.
- 5.5 Failure of any employee to abide by the terms of the Equal Opportunity Policy and Procedure will be treated as a serious matter warranting disciplinary action in accordance with the appropriate procedure.

6.0 Monitoring

The Diversity Committee will have a general role in promoting and monitoring the policy. It will ensure that Equal Opportunities data is collected and monitored on an ongoing basis and will meet at least once a year to discuss Equal opportunity issues, and any legal or external developments which will impact on the College.