



## **Matrix College Equal Opportunities Policy**

### **Purpose and scope**

The purpose of this Equal Opportunities Policy is to communicate our commitment to equality of opportunity, with the aims of ensuring that all students, student applicants, staff, and job applicants are treated fairly and equally, and supporting Matrix's objective of providing a working environment that is free from all forms of discrimination.

The policy applies to all students and staff (henceforth members) within the College. All members are expected to put this policy into practice.

A copy of this policy will be distributed to all and can also be found on Moodle and in the student Handbook. All applicants can access the policy via the Matrix College website and will be sent a copy of the policy on request. In addition, the induction process for new students and staff includes a briefing on this policy.

Any questions about the policy should be directed to the Head of Training.

The Management team has been consulted and has agreed the contents of this policy.

This policy does not form part of student or staff contracts of employment and the College may amend it at any time.

The policy is regularly reviewed annually and may be amended at any time.

### **Policy statement**

The College is fully committed to providing equality in the workplace and all opportunities for, and during employment, will be afforded to individuals fairly and irrespective of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race including colour, ethnic or national origins and nationality, religion or belief or sexual orientation.

We aim to create an environment that is free from discrimination and harassment in any form, in which all members, are treated with dignity and respect.

Matrix will not unlawfully discriminate in the arrangements we make for recruitment and selection or in the opportunities afforded for education or employment, training or any other benefit. All decisions will be made fairly and objectively. We aim, as far as reasonably practicable, to ensure that all our working practices are applied fairly and consistently and, where necessary, we will take reasonable steps to avoid or overcome any particular disadvantage these may cause and to promote equality.

### **Specific Responsibilities**

Matrix has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and associated legislation and for observing relevant Codes of Practice.

The Management Team is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the policy and for ensuring that all employment-related policies, procedures and practices adhere to this policy.

All members have a responsibility not to discriminate or harass other members and to report any such behaviour of which they become aware to their Programme Lead or to The Head of Training.

All staff are responsible for implementing the Equal Opportunities Policy and must apply the policy as part of their work with Matrix.

### **Forms of discrimination**

The following are forms of discrimination that this policy aims to avoid:

Direct Discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic that they either have or are thought to have. Direct discrimination can also occur by way of association, which is when a person is treated less favourably because, for example, their spouse or partner or other relative has the protected characteristic.

Indirect Discrimination occurs when a provision, criterion or practice is applied equally to everyone, but has a disproportionately adverse effect on people who share a particular protected characteristic. A person with the protected characteristic who is disadvantaged in that way has the right to complain. To be justified the provision, criterion, or practice must be necessary for legitimate reasons in circumstances where less discriminatory alternatives are not reasonably available.

Victimisation occurs where someone is treated unfavourably because he/she has raised a complaint under this policy or taken legal action, in relation to any alleged act of unlawful discrimination, against Matrix or because he/she has supported someone else in doing this.

Harassment is unwanted conduct that violates an individual's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Harassment can take many different forms and may involve inappropriate actions, behaviour, comments, emails or physical contact that causes offence or are objectionable. Harassment may involve a single incident or persistent behaviour that extends over a period of time and can occur even if someone did not mean to cause offence. It also means that a person can be subjected to harassment by behaviour that is not aimed at them directly but which they nonetheless find unpleasant. Harassment is always unacceptable and where it relates to a protected characteristic it will amount to an unlawful act of discrimination.

Discrimination arising from Disability - In addition to the above, it is unlawful to treat a person unfavourably because of something that is the result, effect or outcome of their disability, unless the treatment is necessary and can be objectively justified.

Furthermore, employers have a duty to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled applicants, employees or other workers are not substantially disadvantaged.

### **Creating equal opportunities**

There are a number of ways in which Matrix aims to ensure equal opportunities including:

#### **Recruitment and selection**

Recruitment and selection procedures will be free from bias or discrimination. Recruitment procedures will be conducted objectively and will be based upon specific and reasonable job-related criteria. Decisions regarding an individual's suitability for a particular role will be based on aptitude and ability.

We will consider making appropriate reasonable adjustments to the recruitment process to ensure that applicants with disability are not substantially disadvantaged.

#### **Staff Career development**

All staff will be given an appropriate induction to enable them to fulfil the responsibilities of their role. All staff will be encouraged to develop their full potential and we will not unreasonably deny a staff member access to other career development opportunities. These will be determined objectively, taking into account the needs of the business and available resources. Selection for promotion or specific role opportunities will be based on objective criteria and decisions will be made on the basis of previous observed merit.

#### **Terms and conditions**

Our terms and conditions of service will be applied fairly and benefits and facilities will be made available to all staff who should have access to them, as appropriate. Matrix operates a pay system that is transparent, based on objective criteria and free from bias to ensure that all employees are rewarded fairly and equally for their contribution and loyalty.

#### **Employment policies and practices**

Matrix aims to ensure that policies and practices, including any rules or requirements, do not directly or indirectly discriminate and are applied in a non-discriminatory manner.

Matrix will consider making appropriate reasonable adjustments to the working environment or any work arrangements that would alleviate any substantial disadvantage these cause members with disability.

#### **Working environment**

All individuals have a right to be treated with dignity and respect and Matrix takes reasonable steps to protect members from discrimination, bullying or harassment

and, in the event of a complaint, we will take appropriate action to prevent, as far as possible, a further occurrence.

All members are encouraged to report any incidents of inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour that occurs during the course of study, on or off premises.

### **Equal Opportunities Monitoring**

Matrix will monitor the effectiveness of this policy to ensure it is achieving its objectives.

As part of this process we monitor:

- the composition of our student applications and population
- the composition of job applicants and decisions in staff recruitment

Information collected for monitoring purposes will be treated as confidential and will not be used for any other purpose.

### **Raising a complaint of discrimination**

If you believe you have been discriminated against, you should raise the matter in accordance with the Complaints Procedure. A copy of the Complaints Procedure can be found in the Codes and Procedures document.

Any member who is found to have committed an act of discrimination, or breached this policy in any other way, will be subject to action under the Complaints, up to and including dismissal. Students will be subject to appropriate formal action that may, depending on the circumstances, involve terminating any contract or agreement.

Matrix will also take seriously any malicious or, in its opinion, unwarranted allegations of discrimination and will take appropriate action, disciplinary or otherwise, where necessary.