

Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy

at BCS College

BCS College is committed to valuing and promoting Diversity in all areas of recruitment, employment, training and promotion. BCS College (hereinafter referred to as 'the College' or 'we') will work towards a positive environment where all employees can develop their full potential, irrespective of their race, gender, marital status, age, disability, religious belief, political opinion or sexual orientation. This policy applies to all employees. The Board of Directors at BCS College accepts full responsibility to implement this policy in an effective and practical way but it also requires the full responsibility of all employees as a team effort.

Managing Diversity

Managing Diversity is a more effective way of dealing with equal opportunities issues. It emphasises the business and personal benefits that accrue from valuing the differences between people, rather than just complying with the law. Organisations that grasp the additional business opportunities generated by managing diversity effectively are far more likely to enjoy sustained competitive advantage than those who do not.

Why is it important

- ⇒ It is essential that we attract and retain the most talented people to continue to compete successfully in the market. Skills and ability are not, for example, the preserve of one particular ethnic group or one gender; by recognising this we can widen our recruitment pool and maximise the potential of our existing employees
- ⇒ BCS College are committed to providing service excellence to all our customers and we believe that this can be better achieved by a workforce that values and reflects the diversity of our society
- ⇒ We operate in an increasingly diverse society. In order to enhance business opportunities we should reflect and value that diversity in our advertising, marketing and lectures and how we deal with students and others.
- ⇒ Employee motivation and commitment are more likely to increase if people feel valued and perceive that they are being treated fairly.
- ⇒ There are laws that set out how employers and individuals should act and that includes Sex discrimination, equal pay, race discriminations, disabilities etc.

Employer's Responsibility

- To comply with the letter and spirit of this policy
- To value diversity in society and in our workforce as a means of broadening the Company's talent base, achieving the highest levels of performance, and enabling all employees to reach their full potential
- To identify various behaviours and barriers that discrimination can take, and understand the negative effect these can have on the College and its' employees, students and customers
- To drive away the myth that only certain types of people are suitable for certain types of jobs or training
- To monitor the application of the Managing Diversity Policy, and work towards eliminating any discriminatory practices which may be limiting the College's ability to achieve its' objectives, thereby maintaining our reputation as a fair and responsible employer.

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Employees Responsibility

- To comply with the requirements of this policy
- To be aware of the various behaviours and barriers that discrimination can take, and understand the negative impact these can have on the College, the students, customers and your colleagues
- To be sensitive to the potential impact of your own behaviour on students, colleagues, customers and job applicants.
- To co-operate with management in the elimination of any discriminatory practices which may be identified

Misunderstandings that should be avoided

Care should be taken to ensure that decisions and actions are not influenced by stereotype views. Examples of such misunderstandings are:

- Ethnic minorities lack qualifications
- Women with young children are less committed to their work
- Disabled employees are more likely to be sick than the average member of employees
- Older workers lack ambition and enthusiasm
- Part-timers are less committed to their work than those who work full time

Recruitment and Selection

Every effort should be made to attract applications from all sections of society and to ensure fair treatment throughout the recruitment process. This will include:

- Checking that job and candidate specifications are relevant and non-discriminatory
- Ensuring that the wording and images used in job adverts reflect and appeal to all sections of society
- Using advertising media that reach all sections of society
- Communicating our policy to recruitment and employment agencies if these are to be used for such services.
- Short-listing only those people whose skills and qualifications most closely match the candidate specification
- Asking fair and consistent questions at interview
- Keeping records of the recruitment and selection process, including interviews for at least 6 months.
- Monitoring recruitment and selection to ensure equality of opportunity throughout the process and, if necessary, taking steps to eliminate and discriminatory practices

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Interviewing Procedure

When interviewing job applicants, employees should ask fair and consistent questions which focus on their employment and performance issues rather than the candidate's private life.

It is unlawful to ask candidates about their family commitments or medical history unless they are clearly relevant to the job and are asked of all candidates.

The following are examples of assumptions which should **NOT BE MADE**, and questions which should **NOT BE ASKED**:

- Are you planning to get engaged or married?
- Do you have any children?
- How old are your children?
- What is your husband's employment?
- What would your husband think about you working evenings?

Questions that **CAN** be asked are:

- If asked to work extra hours at short notice, would that be a possibility?
- This job may involve travelling to venues, would that be a problem for you ?

Career Development

When making decisions on promotions and career development, Managers and Directors should focus on the employee as an individual, with particular talents and experiences, rather than make assumptions based on their age, race, gender, marital status or disability.

Where, for example, jobs have been undertaken mainly by one gender or race in the past, reasonable efforts should be made to encourage others to apply for these posts.

Flexible working, such as job-sharing, can also assist the Company to retain the skills of valued employee who wish to continue their careers but who may have, for example, caring responsibilities outside of work.

Staff Training

The role of training is to improve performance in the job, to develop skills, and to have a wider understanding of the range of courses delivered by the College.

As with promotion and career development, Managers and directors should focus on the development needs of individuals. For example, priority should not be given to training a man in preference to a woman, and it should not be assumed that family commitments of either men or women will limit their career ambitions.

All training materials should be checked to ensure that the language and images used in them reflect the diversity of our employees and customers. Every effort will be made to accommodate the specific needs of disabled employees.

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Grievance and Discipline

If any employee believes that they have been unfairly discriminated against they should first consult with director but also have the option of a formal complaint and the full procedure is contained in the Company Rules 'Grievance Procedure'.

Also if any employee is found to have breached the Company's Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy they may be subject to disciplinary action under the Company Rules contained in the section 'Dismissal and Disciplinary Procedure'.

Monitoring

The Directors will maintain Human Resources records of the age, race, gender, marital status, and disability of job applicants and existing employees and accept the responsibility to apply the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy.

Any patterns of under representation (for example, where one gender or race appears to have a consistently reduced chance of promotion) should be fully investigated by Directors, and any discriminatory practices identified and eliminated.

Disabled Employees

The College recognises its responsibility towards disabled employees and seeks to eliminate unjustified discrimination on the basis of disability by:

- ❖ Recognising the range of talent and skill possessed by disabled people
- ❖ Interviewing all disabled job applicants who meet the minimum selection criteria for a job vacancy and consider them on their abilities
- ❖ Ensuring all disabled employees are properly & effectively inducted into the College
- ❖ Identifying and making any 'reasonable adjustments' to working arrangements or the working environment necessary for the effective performance of their job and their ergonomic comfort at work.
- ❖ Making every effort to retain employees who become disabled whilst in the employment of the College
- ❖ Reviewing each year these commitments, what has been achieved and planning ways to improve.
- ❖ Obtaining feed back from employees to ensure that disabilities are being properly and adequately dealt with at work.

The College also recognises its duties towards disabled students and customers and is committed to eliminating unjustified discrimination against students and customers on the grounds of disability. It will not therefore unreasonably:

1. Refuse or deliberately omit to provide its services to disabled students etc
2. Provide reduced level services or poorer services or to a lower standard on the grounds of disability
3. Fail to make any of the following reasonable adjustments, so far as is reasonably practicable for a disabled person where these are needed:
 - Make changes to our policies, procedures or practices
 - Provide auxiliary aids or services
 - Remove, alter or provide a reasonable means of avoiding any physical barrier which makes it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to use our services

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Age

The College is fully committed to promoting age diversity. In valuing the contribution of its employees, regardless of age, the College will seek to eliminate age 'stereotyping' and discrimination on the basis of age. The underlying premise of this is that employees should be assessed on the basis of their skills, ability and potential, not their age. This means that employment opportunities and personal/career development will be available, irrespective of a person's age.

This will include:

- Making employment decisions on objective, job-related criteria
- Encouraging staff of all ages to develop their careers
- Ensuring that staff of all age groups participating in training, and have the chance to improve their skills and experiences
- Avoiding assumptions about the physical abilities and career intentions of older job applicants or employees
- Seeking to maximise the opportunity for both the business and employees, through flexible working patterns, retraining and the offer of flexibility to retire beyond normal retirement age by agreement with the Directors of the College.

Dignity and Respect at Work

Where achievement has been recognised (such as providing a reward or verbal etc recognition of the achievement) with a member of staff by the Management and / or Directors then equally other achievements by other staff of similar nature should be recognised for other staff regardless of status, sex, race, religion or disability etc.

The College aims to create a working environment that releases the full potential of employees and encourages their creativity and productivity. Unwanted behaviour in the **form of bullying or harassment affects** the dignity of everyone subjected to it.

All employees have the right to be treated with consideration and respect at work. It is the College's firm intention to create a climate free from bullying and harassment, and in which all employees feel confident to raise concerns of this kind and have them dealt with quickly, sensitively and effectively.