

# Equality and Diversity Policy

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## Introduction

Quest recognises that it is essential to provide equal opportunities to all persons without discrimination. This policy sets out in more details the company's position on equal opportunity in all aspects of employment, including recruitment and promotion, and provides guidance and encouragement to employees and consultants at all levels to act fairly and prevent discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, marital status, disability as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, part-time and fixed term contract status, age, sexual orientation or religion.

## Definition of Discrimination

- Discrimination can be direct or indirect. Both forms of discrimination must be avoided.
- Direct discrimination occurs when one person is treated less favourably than another on grounds relating to sex, race, marital status, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.
- Indirect discrimination occurs where a requirement is imposed which can be complied with by a smaller proportion of persons of a particular sex, race, marital status, disability, age, part-time or fixed term contract status, sexual orientation or religion, than persons in another group and which is not objectively justifiable in the given situation.

## Statement of policy

It is the policy of Quest to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of sex, race, marital status, disability, age, part-time or fixed term contract status, sexual orientation or religion, or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements that cannot be shown to be justifiable. The company is committed not only to its legal obligations, but also to the positive promotion of equality of opportunity in all aspects of employment.

The company recognises that adhering to the Equality and Diversity policy, combined with relevant employment policies and practices, maximises the effective use of individuals in both the company's and employees' best interests. Quest recognises the great benefits in having a diverse workforce with different backgrounds, solely employed on ability.

The application of recruitment, training, and promotion policies to all individuals will be on the basis of job requirements and the individual's ability and merits.

All employees of the company will be made aware of the provisions of this policy.

## Relevant legislation and code of practice

Legislation exists to promote equality of opportunity. In this policy, the term "discrimination" refers to circumstances in which a person is treated less favourably than others on the grounds defined in the following Acts, Regulations and Codes of Practice: the Sex Discrimination Act 1975(Amendment)Regulations 2003; the Sex Discrimination Act,1975; the Gender Reassignment

Regulations 1999; the Race Relations Act, 1976 & Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000; the Equal Pay Act 1970 (Amendment) Regulations 2003; the Disability and Discrimination Act 1995; the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, 1974; the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 and the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003.

## **Recruitment and promotion**

Advertisements for posts will give sufficiently clear and accurate information to enable potential applicants to assess their own suitability for the post. Information about vacant posts will be provided in such a manner that does not restrict its audience in terms of sex, race, marital status, disability, age, part-time or fixed term contract status, sexual orientation or religion.

Recruitment literature will not imply a preference for one group of applicants unless there is a genuine occupational qualification which limits the post to this particular group, in which case this must be clearly stated.

All vacancies will be circulated internally.

All descriptions and specifications for posts will include only requirements that are necessary and justifiable for the effective performance of the job.

All selection will be thorough, conducted against defined criteria and will deal only with the applicant's suitability for the job. Where it is necessary to ask questions relating to personal circumstances, these will be related purely to job requirements and asked to all candidates.

## **Employment**

Quest will not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, marital status, disability, age, part-time or fixed term contract status, sexual orientation or religion in the allocation of duties between employees employed at any level with comparable job descriptions.

The company will put in place any reasonable measures and/or adjustments within the workplace for those employees who become disabled during employment or for disabled appointees.

All employees will be considered solely on their merits for career development and promotion with equal opportunities for all.

## **Training**

Employees and consultants will be provided with appropriate training regardless of sex, race, marital status, disability, age, part-time or fixed term contract status, sexual orientation or religion. They will be encouraged to discuss their career prospects and training needs with Quest Management team.

## **Monitoring**

It is the responsibility of Quest to ensure that all aspects of this policy are kept under review and are operated throughout the company. Where it appears that applicants/employees/consultants are not being offered equal opportunities, circumstances will be investigated to identify any policies or criteria which exclude or discourage certain employees and, if so, whether these are justifiable. Every opportunity will be taken to promote and raise awareness of Quest's Equality and Diversity Policy.

## **Grievances and victimisation**

Quest emphasises that discrimination is unacceptable conduct which may lead to disciplinary action under the company's Disciplinary Procedure. Any complaints of discrimination will be pursued through the company's Grievance Procedure.

## **Review and Consultation**

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis in accordance with legislative developments and the need for good practice. Policy is accessible to all employees and consultants on the company web site and it is included in Quest corporate handbook. This policy should not be read in isolation, but cross-referenced with all relevant Quest employment policies.

Managing Director  
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