

Equal Opportunities Policy

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Contents

Section	Page
1. About this policy	3
2. We are committed to	3
3. Discrimination	3
4. Recruitment and selection	4
5. Disabilities	4
6. Part time and fixed-term work	5
7. Breaches of this policy	5

Equal Opportunities Policy

1. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STATEMENT

UCFB is committed to promoting equal opportunities in employment and eliminating unlawful discrimination. You and any job applicants will receive equal treatment regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation (Protected Characteristics).

2. ABOUT THIS POLICY

2.1 This policy sets out our approach to equal opportunities and the avoidance of discrimination at work. It applies to all aspects of employment with us, including recruitment, pay and conditions, training, appraisals, promotion, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and termination of employment.

2.2 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.

3. WE ARE COMMITTED TO

3.1 Encourage equality and diversity in the workplace as they are good practice and make business sense.

3.2 Create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.

3.3 You should understand that, as well as UCFB, individuals can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of your employment, against fellow employees, students, suppliers and the public.

3.4 Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, students, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of our work activities

3.5 Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence

3.6 Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff, you will be helped and encouraged to develop your full potential, so your talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

3.7 Decisions concerning staff being based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).

3.8 Review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law.

3.9 Monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality and diversity, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equality policy.

4. DISCRIMINATION

4.1 You must not unlawfully discriminate against or harass other people including current and former employees, job applicants, clients, customers, suppliers and visitors. This applies in the workplace, outside the workplace (when dealing with customers, suppliers or other work-related contacts or when wearing a work uniform), and on work-related trips or events including social events.

4.2 The following forms of discrimination are prohibited under this policy and are unlawful:

(a) Direct discrimination: treating someone less favourably because of a Protected Characteristic. For example, rejecting a job applicant because of their religious views or because they might be gay.

(b) Indirect discrimination: a provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone but adversely affects people with a particular Protected Characteristic more than others, and is not justified. For example, requiring a job to be done full-time rather than part-time would adversely affect women because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement would be discriminatory unless it can be justified.

(c) Harassment: this includes sexual harassment and other unwanted conduct related to a Protected Characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. Harassment is dealt with further in our Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy.

(d) Victimization: retaliation against someone who has complained or has supported someone else's complaint about discrimination or harassment.

(e) Disability discrimination: this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

5. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

5.1 Recruitment, promotion and other selection exercises such as redundancy selection will be conducted on the basis of merit, against objective criteria that avoid discrimination. Shortlisting should be done by more than one person if possible.

5.2 Vacancies should generally be advertised to a diverse section of the labour market. Advertisements should avoid stereotyping or using wording that may discourage particular groups from applying.

5.3 Job applicants should not be asked questions

which might suggest an intention to discriminate on grounds of a Protected Characteristic. For example, applicants should not be asked whether they are pregnant or planning to have children.

5.4 Job applicants should not be asked about health or disability before a job offer is made, except in the very limited circumstances allowed by law: for example, to check that the applicant could perform an intrinsic part of the job (taking account of any reasonable adjustments), or to see if any reasonable adjustments might be needed at interview because of a disability. Where necessary, job offers can be made conditional on a satisfactory medical check. Health or disability questions may be included in equal opportunities monitoring forms, which must not be used for selection or decision-making purposes.

6. DISABILITIES

6.1 If you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can consider what reasonable adjustments or support may be appropriate. We may ask for your permission to refer you to our occupational health provider for an assessment to help us put the right support in place if needed.

6.2 Where known that you are absent due to a disability, we will always investigate what reasonable adjustments could be made to help facilitate your return to work.

6.3 Where known that your absence is due to a disability and following a recommendation from our occupational health provider, we may adjust the absence trigger points referred to in our absence policy to discount some of the absences, taking into account the nature of your disability and any reasonable adjustments already in place.

6.4 Where known that you have a disability and your level of absence, after considering reasonable

adjustments, cannot be sustained your line manager must seek advice from HR and occupational health before making a decision on whether or not to issue a warning under the absence procedure.

7. PART-TIME AND FIXED-TERM WORK

Part-time and fixed-term employees should be treated the same as comparable full-time or permanent employees and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro-rata basis where appropriate), unless different treatment is justified.

8. BREACHES OF THIS POLICY

8.1 We take a strict approach to breaches of this policy, which will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure. Serious cases of deliberate discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal.

8.2 If you believe that you have suffered discrimination you can raise the matter through our Grievance Procedure or Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy. Complaints will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate.

8.3 You must not be victimised or retaliated against for complaining about discrimination. However, making a false allegation deliberately and in bad faith will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.