



# ASSOCIATION OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS IN OPHTHALMOLOGY

## Equality and Diversity Policy

### Mission Statement

AHPO is committed to eliminating discrimination and encouraging diversity. AHPO is opposed to any form of less favourable treatment or financial reward through direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or victimisation of employees or contractors on the grounds of race, religious beliefs, political opinions, creed, colour, ethnic origin, nationality, marital/parental status, sex, sexual orientation or disability and to any form of less favourable treatment on the grounds of handicap or age. We will actively promote equal opportunities in the conduct of our work to ensure that individuals receive treatment that is fair and equitable and consistent with their relevant aptitudes, potential skills and abilities. In particular

- Our qualifications do not restrict access and progression
- There is an equal opportunity for anyone who is capable of reaching the standard to access our qualifications
- Our qualifications are free from discriminatory practices with regards to gender, marital status, colour, age, racial origin, creed, nationality, disability or social background
- Our publications are free from discriminatory practices with regards to gender, marital status, colour, age, racial origin, creed, nationality, disability or social background
- Assessment tasks are sufficiently varied to ensure that no particular group is placed at any disadvantage
- Assessments are valid to ensure that all student members receive impartial treatment
- Assessments are reliable to ensure that all student members receive impartial treatment

### Purpose of this Policy

This policy outlines how AHPO will work to ensure and promote equal opportunities in all its work, with the aim of eliminating discrimination and promoting good relations between people of different groups. It also sets out the responsibilities of staff, students and others. The Policy covers the nine “Protected Characteristics” from The Public Sector Equality Duties, including: **age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation and pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnerships.**

### Policy Statement

AHPO believes that all learners should have the same opportunity to access its qualifications and that they should be awarded in a way that is fair to every learner. In this context equality of opportunity means:

- Working to ensure equality of access and resources for all regardless of “Protected Characteristics” identified in The Equalities Act 2010: Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Pregnancy and maternity, Race, Religion or belief, Sex and Sexual orientation and socio-economic status, politics, marital status, trade union membership or responsibility for dependants
- Providing an environment which promotes and celebrates equality and diversity and is free from unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation of any kind

- Respecting equally, supporting appropriately and rewarding fairly each student, employee, and user of its services
- Recruiting, selecting, promoting staff on the basis of objective criteria
- Accepting learners on AHPO courses on the basis of objective criteria
- Training staff in equality and diversity and how to value and apply this in practice
- Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of our equal opportunities strategies and targets
- Complying with all current equalities legislation in employment and provision of teaching and services and procurement.

## **Responsibility for equality of opportunity**

It is unlawful to discriminate, victimise or harass on the grounds of Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Pregnancy and Maternity, Marital status, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation.

Under legislation and this policy, every trustee, member of staff or contractor has a responsibility to:

- Familiarise themselves with the responsibilities that equalities legislation places on them and ensure that they are sensitive to issues of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation
- Not discriminate unlawfully
- Not to put pressure on others to discriminate unlawfully
- Question their own prejudices and assumptions
- Challenge attitudes which demean or denigrate other people (individuals or groups) and develop self awareness of the impact of your own behaviour

Certain individuals have additional responsibilities under this policy, as set out below:

- The Trustees are responsible for setting the policy framework for AHPO and for monitoring AHPO delivery against the policy;
- The Chairperson has overall responsibility for the operation of the Policy;

*Appropriate action may be taken against anybody who does not comply with the requirements of this policy*

## **Implementation**

AHPO aims to ensure that unlawful or unfair discrimination, whether direct or indirect, is eliminated both in access to and assessment of its qualifications and that equality of opportunity is promoted. Where it is reasonable and practical to do so, it will take steps to address identified inequalities or barriers that may arise.

AHPO will consult as appropriate with relevant learners and/or their representatives to ensure that there are no barriers to entry to units and qualifications it develops and/or offers. The nature of any barriers will be stated and the inclusion of the requirements that create the barrier justified only and explicitly in terms of the integrity of unit or the qualification. Any details of how the effect of any barriers will be mitigated, including using access arrangements, including reasonable adjustments, will also be recorded, as required.

AHPO is responsible for the effective implementation of this policy and expects all stakeholders associated with the organisation to abide by the policy.

In order to implement this policy AHPO shall:

- Communicate the policy to all stakeholders
- Endeavour through appropriate training to ensure that we will not consciously or unconsciously discriminate in the selection or recruitment of staff and contractors. applicants / learners
- Incorporate specific and appropriate duties in respect of implementing the equal opportunities policy into roles and responsibilities of AHPO Committee members, Trustees and administrative staff
- Incorporate equal opportunities notices into general communications practices (e.g. announcements, annual report at annual general meeting, notices and newsletters)
- Ensure that adequate resources are made available to fulfil the objectives of the policy

## **Grievance Procedure**

AHPO stakeholders or learners who believe that they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation that falls within the remit of AHPO are entitled to raise the matter through the AHPO Grievance Procedure, a copy of which can be obtained on request. All complaints of discrimination, bullying and harassment will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially.

## **Monitoring and Review**

Access to and progress in AHPO qualifications shall be connected solely with an individual's merits, abilities and potential.

AHPO may collect data to monitor and review its diversity and equality policy, and evaluate compliance with the requirements set out.

The effectiveness of the equal opportunities policy will be reviewed regularly (at least annually) and action taken as necessary.

## **Ofqual Reference**

This policy relates to the Ofqual criteria for general conditions of recognition:

*A1 Suitability for continuing recognition*

*D2 Accessibility of Qualifications*

*E4 Ensuring an assessment is fit for purpose*

*G2 Language of the assessment*

*G6 Arrangements for Reasonable Adjustments*

*G7 Arrangements for Special Consideration*

## **Contact Details**

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