Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) policy

Policy statement

SWET is committed to creating a Centre where equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) are integral to our operations. We value and promote an inclusive environment where everyone is treated fairly, with dignity and respect. Our aim is to attract, develop, and retain a diverse workforce that reflects the communities we serve. The business aims to ensure that everyone in the workplace feels valued, respected, and supported in the workplace, regardless of their background or personal characteristics.

SWET is committed to a policy of treating all its Learners, employees and job applicants equally, as well as providing reasonable adjustments to provide equality of opportunity to disabled employees and learners. SWET will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment and selection, promotion, transfer, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, other terms of employment, discipline, selection for redundancy and dismissal.

It is the policy of SWET to take all reasonable steps to employ and promote employees on the basis of their abilities and qualifications without regard to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), religion or belief, sex and/or sexual orientation. In this policy, these are known as the 'protected characteristics'. SWET will appoint, train, develop and promote on the basis of merit and ability alone.

Scope

This policy applies to all Learners and employee conduct in the Centre and also to employees' conduct outside of the workplace that is related to employees' work, including conduct at meetings, social events and social interactions with colleagues. This policy also applies to employees' conduct outside work which may impact on the business's reputation, including employees' expression of views on social media which are contrary to the commitments

expressed in this policy, that could be linked to Swet.

Employees' duties

Employees have a duty to co-operate with SWET to ensure that this policy is effective to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace and to prevent discrimination and harassment. Action under the business's disciplinary procedure will be taken against any employee who is found to have committed an act of unlawful discrimination. Serious breaches of the EDI policy will be treated as potential gross misconduct and could render the employee liable to summary dismissal. Employees should also bear in mind that they can be held personally liable for any act of unlawful discrimination.

Employees must not harass, bully or intimidate other employees for reasons related to one or more of the protected characteristics. Such behaviour will be treated as potential gross misconduct under the business's disciplinary procedure. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may also be guilty of a criminal offence. The business has a separate dignity at work policy which deals with these issues and sets out how complaints of this type will be dealt with.

Employees should draw the attention of their line manager to suspected discriminatory acts or practices. Alternatively, employees may decide to raise these concerns with another colleague in a relevant position of seniority, or to raise the matter through the business's Grievance Policy. Employees must not victimise or retaliate against an employee who has made allegations or complaints of discrimination or who has provided information about such discrimination. Such behaviour will be treated as potential gross misconduct under the business's disciplinary procedure. Employees should support colleagues who suffer such treatment and are making a complaint.

Managers' duties

Managers must ensure that those they manage adhere to the policy and promote the business's aims and objectives set out in this policy regarding EDI. Managers are also responsible for identifying and addressing any behaviours or processes that conflict with this policy. Managers will be given appropriate training on EDI awareness from time to time.

Our Approach to Equal Opportunities with Students

Our approach follows these guidelines:

- Our equal opportunities will not discriminate against any groupings or individuals
- We will not tolerate prejudice in the form of victimisation or harassment from students on the grounds of personal differences
- Equality of opportunities is the responsibility of all people and organisations working for, with or on behalf of the company
- All staff and students will be aware of this policy and will support its implementation
- We will have an open and trusting environment in which individuals are encouraged to challenge inequality and have the freedom to discuss equal opportunities where appropriate

Failure by staff and students to follow the guidelines set out in this policy will be taken very seriously and could lead to disciplinary action.

1. Student Recruitment and Selection

When recruiting for any course the primary objective is to find people who meet the entry requirements of the course. Our objective is to provide all staff that have an active role in recruitment and selection with suitable training. Such training will include the legislation and other issues incorporated within the company's Equal Opportunities outlook.

1.1. Advertisements

All staff involved in the advertising process must ensure advertisements do not contain un-necessary criteria that create unnecessary barriers to entry. All advertisements must then be authorised by the Managing Director.

1.2. Selection and Testing

Selection of students must be solely based on the entry requirements of the award.

All applicants can request a copy of the Centre's Equal Opportunities policy. We will make every effort to ensure that the needs of all applicants are catered for as far as we possibly can. Skills testing must be designed so that the test is fair to all applicants.

2. Progress Reviews

We use CLEAR (Concise, Limited by Time, Exact, Achievable, Realistic) target in our Progress Reviews. This will assist in providing a fair framework to base training and development.

3. Complaints of Harassment from Students

If any student has a complaint of harassment, they should utilise the Student Complaints Procedure. Complaints will be treated in the strictest confidence and where necessary investigated promptly and thoroughly.

Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when, because of one of the protected characteristics, a job applicant or an employee is treated less favourably than other job applicants or employees are treated or would be treated.

The treatment will still amount to direct discrimination even if it is based on the protected characteristic of a third party with whom the job applicant or employee is associated and not on the job applicant's or employee's own protected characteristic. In addition, it can include cases where it is perceived that a job applicant or an employee has a particular protected characteristic when in fact, they do not.

Discrimination after employment is also unlawful if it arises out of and is closely connected to the employment relationship, for example refusing to give a reference or providing an unfavourable reference for a reason related to one of the protected characteristics.

The business will take all reasonable steps to eliminate direct discrimination in all aspects of employment.

Indirect discrimination

Indirect discrimination is treatment that may be equal in the sense that it applies to all job applicants or employees, but which is discriminatory in its effect on, for example, one sex or racial group.

Indirect discrimination occurs when there is applied to the job applicant or employee a provision, criterion or practice (PCP) which is discriminatory in relation to a protected characteristic of the job applicants or employees. A PCP is discriminatory in relation to a protected

characteristic of the job applicant or employee if:

- It is applied, or would be applied, to persons with whom the job applicant or employee does not share the protected characteristic,
- The PCP puts, or would put, persons with whom the job applicant or employee shares the protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage when compared with persons with whom the job applicant or employee does not share it,
- It puts, or would put, the job applicant or employee at that disadvantage, and
- It cannot be shown by the business to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

SWET will take all reasonable steps to eliminate indirect discrimination in all aspects of employment.

Reasonable adjustments

Employers are legally obliged to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that aspects of employment, or the employer's premises, do not put a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage. Failing to comply with this duty is unlawful.

Examples of reasonable adjustments might include:

- allocating some of the disabled person's duties to a colleague;
- changing their working hours or place of work;
- adjusting procedures for assessing job candidates; and
- modifying disciplinary and grievance procedures.

SWET will put it place reasonable adjustments for disabled employees and recruits in all aspects of employment and recruitment in compliance with its statutory duty where the business is aware the employee or applicant is disabled.

Harassment and sexual harassment

Harassment is unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of:

- violating someone else's dignity; or
- creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for someone else.

Sexual harassment is:

- conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment; and
- less favourable treatment related to sex or gender reassignment that occurs because of a rejection of, or submission to, sexual conduct.

The business will take all reasonable steps to eliminate harassment based on a protected characteristic and sexual harassment, in all aspects of employment.

Victimisation

Victimisation occurs when an employee is subjected to a detriment, such as being denied a training opportunity or a promotion, because they have raised or supported a grievance or complaint of unlawful discrimination, or because they have issued employment tribunal proceedings for unlawful discrimination or they have given evidence in connection with unlawful discrimination proceedings brought by another employee. However, an employee is not protected if they give false evidence or information, or make a false allegation, and they do so in bad faith. Post-employment victimisation is also unlawful, for example refusing to give a reference or providing an unfavourable reference because the former employee has done one of the protected acts set out above.

The business will take all reasonable steps to eliminate victimisation in all aspects of employment.

Sources of recruitment

The recruitment process will be conducted in such a way as to result in the selection of the most suitable person for the job in respect of abilities and qualifications. The business is committed to applying its EDI at all stages of recruitment and selection.

Advertisements

Advertisements will aim to positively encourage applications from all suitably qualified people. Advertisements should avoid stereotyping or language or criteria that may discourage particular groups from applying. When advertising job vacancies, to attract applications from all sections of the community, the business will, as far as reasonably practicable:

- Ensure advertisements are not confined to those areas or publications which would exclude or disproportionately reduce the numbers of applicants with a particular protected characteristic;
- Avoid setting any unnecessary provisions or criteria which would exclude a higher proportion of people with a particular protected characteristic.
- Offer flexible working arrangements where possible under the business's flexible working policy to ensure that we do not unintentionally exclude any group of candidates.

Where vacancies may be filled by promotion or transfer, they will be published to all eligible employees in such a way that they do not restrict applications from employees with a particular protected characteristic.

However, where, having regard to the nature and context of the work, having a particular protected characteristic is an occupational requirement and that occupational requirement is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim, the business will apply that requirement to the job role, and this may therefore be specified in the advertisement.

Selection methods

The selection process will be carried out consistently for all jobs at all levels.

The selection of new staff will be based on the job requirements and the individual's suitability and ability to do, or to train for, the job in question. Person specifications and job descriptions will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Candidates for employment, promotion or transfer will be assessed objectively against the requirements for the job.

With disabled job applicants, SWET will have regard to its duty to make reasonable adjustments to work provisions, criteria or practices or to physical features of work premises or to provide auxiliary aids or services in order to ensure that the disabled person is not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with persons who are not disabled.

Selection tests

Any selection tests which are used will be limited to questions relating to the particular job and/or career requirements. The tests will measure the individual's actual or inherent ability to do or to train for the work or career. Thus, questions or exercises on matters which may be unfamiliar to applicants with a particular protected characteristic will not be included in the tests if they are unrelated to the requirements of the particular job. The tests which are used will be reviewed from time to time in order to ensure that they remain relevant and free from any unjustifiable bias, either in content or in scoring mechanism.

Applications and interviewing

All applications will be processed in the same way. The staff responsible for short-listing, interviewing and selecting candidates will be clearly informed of the selection criteria and of the need for their consistent application.

Wherever possible, all applicants will be interviewed by at least two interviewers. All questions that are put to the applicants will relate to the requirements of the job. 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.

Questions about disability and health

Job applicants should not be asked about health or disability before a job offer is made. There are limited exceptions to this. For example:

- Questions necessary to establish if an applicant can perform an intrinsic part of the job (subject to any reasonable adjustments).

- Questions to establish if an applicant is fit to attend an assessment or any reasonable adjustments that may be needed at interview or assessment.
- Positive action to recruit disabled persons.
- Equality, diversity and inclusion monitoring (which will not form part of the selection or decision-making process).

Where necessary, job offers can be made conditional on a satisfactory medical check.

If it is necessary to assess whether personal circumstances will affect the performance of the job (for example, if the job involves unsociable hours or extensive travel), this will be discussed objectively, without detailed questions based on assumptions about any of the protected characteristics.

Training, transfer and promotion

SWET will take such measures as may be necessary to ensure the proper training, supervision and instruction for all line managers in order to familiarise them with the business's policy on EDI, and in order to help them identify discriminatory acts or practices and to ensure that they promote equal opportunity within the departments for which they are responsible. The training will also enable line managers to deal more effectively with complaints of bullying and harassment.

SWET will also provide training to all employees to help them understand their rights and responsibilities under the business's equality, diversity and inclusion and dignity at work policies and what they can do to create a work environment that is free from discrimination, bullying and harassment.

All persons responsible for selecting new employees, employees for training or employees for transfer or promotion to other jobs will be instructed not to discriminate because of one or more of the protected characteristics.

Where a promotional system is in operation, the assessment criteria will be examined to ensure that they are not discriminatory. The promotional system will be checked from time to time in order to assess how it is working in practice.

When a group of workers who predominantly have a particular protected characteristic appear to be excluded from access to promotion, transfer and training and to other benefits, the business's systems and procedures will be reviewed to ensure there is no unlawful discrimination.

Terms of employment, benefits, facilities and services

All terms of employment, benefits, facilities and services will be reviewed from time to time in order to ensure that there is no unlawful direct or indirect discrimination because of one or more of the protected characteristics.

Equal pay and equality of terms

The business is committed to equal pay and equality of terms in employment. It believes its male and female employees should receive equal pay where they are carrying out like work, work rated as equivalent or work of equal value. In order to achieve this, the business will endeavour to maintain a pay system that is transparent, free from bias and based on objective criteria.

Grievances and complaints

All allegations of discrimination will be dealt with seriously, confidentially and speedily. The business will not ignore or treat lightly grievances or complaints about unlawful discrimination from employees. Such complaints should be raised promptly under the terms of the business's grievance procedure.

If the complaint involves bullying or harassment, the grievance procedure is modified as set out in the dignity at work policy.

Employees will not be penalised for raising a grievance, even if it is not upheld, unless the complaint was both untrue and made in bad faith.

Monitoring equality, diversity and inclusion

SWET will regularly monitor the effects of selection decisions and personnel practices and procedures in order to assess whether equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in the workplace is being achieved. This will also involve considering any possible indirectly discriminatory effects of its standard working practices. If changes are required, the business will implement them. The business will also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome substantial disadvantages caused by disability.

Provision of information by job applicants and employees regarding a protected characteristic is voluntary and it will not adversely affect an individual's chances of recruitment or any other decision related to their employment. The information regarding protected characteristics, including in any EDI monitoring form, is stored confidentially and kept separate from applications before shortlisting. This information will be used solely by the business for the purpose of EDI monitoring. Reviewing this data helps the business to take appropriate steps to avoid discrimination and improve equality and diversity.