



# London Design & Engineering UTC

## Staff Equality and Diversity Policy

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# Staff Equality and Diversity Policy

## Policy Statement

The Board of Directors of the London Design and Engineering (LDE) UTC is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all staff and job applicants. The LDE UTC aims to create a supportive and inclusive working environment in which all individuals are able to make best use of their skills, free from discrimination or harassment, and in which all decisions are based on merit.

The LDE UTC does not discriminate on the basis of age; race; sex; disability; sexual orientation; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; religion, faith or belief. (Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics). The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which staff and Directors treat visitors, volunteers, contractors and former staff members.

All staff have a duty to act in accordance with this policy and treat colleagues with dignity at all times, and not to discriminate against or harass other members of staff, regardless of their status.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and may be amended at any time.

## Scope and Purpose of the Policy

This policy applies to all aspects of our relationship with staff and to relations between staff members at all levels. This includes job advertisements, recruitment and selection, training and development, opportunities for promotion, conditions of service, pay and benefits, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and termination of employment.

The LDE UTC will take appropriate steps to accommodate the requirements of different religions, cultures, and domestic responsibilities.

This policy covers all individuals working at all levels and grades, including senior managers, employees, trainees, part-time and fixed-term employees, volunteers, casual workers, agency staff and governors (collectively referred to a **staff** in this policy).

## Roles and Responsibilities

The LDE UTC Board of Directors has ultimate responsibility for the effective implementation and operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with discrimination law. The Board is responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy [and reporting on the progress made in achieving targets set by the Board]. Day-to-day operational responsibility, including regular review of this policy, has been delegated to the Principal.

All senior managers must set an appropriate standard of behaviour; lead by example and ensure that those they manage adhere to the policy and promote our aims and objectives with regard to equality and diversity. Managers will be given appropriate training on

equalities awareness and open and fair recruitment and selection best practice. All members of staff are personally responsible for ensuring that they adhere to the policy and promote our aims and objectives with regard to equalities.

In certain circumstances the Board of Directors could be held to be vicariously liable for actions of their staff. Staff should be aware that they may be personally liable if they are found to have discriminated against another person whilst in the UTC or on UTC-related business.

If you are involved in management or recruitment, or if you have any questions about the content or application of this policy, you should contact the Principal to request further information.

### **Forms of Discrimination**

Discrimination by or against an employee is generally prohibited unless there is a specific legal exemption. Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally.

Direct discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more of the protected characteristics set out above. For example, rejecting an applicant on the grounds of their race because they would not “fit in” would be direct discrimination.

Indirect discrimination occurs where someone is disadvantaged by an unjustified provision, criterion or practice that also puts other people with the same protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage. For example, a requirement to work full time puts women at a particular disadvantage because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement will need to be objectively justified.

Harassment related to any of the protected characteristics is prohibited. Harassment is unwanted conduct that 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.

Victimisation is also prohibited. This is less favourable treatment of someone who has complained or given information about discrimination or harassment, or supported someone else’s complaint.

### **Staff Training and Promotion and Conditions of Service**

Staff training needs will be identified through regular staff appraisals. All staff will be given appropriate access to training to enable them to progress within the organisation and all promotion decisions will be made on the basis of merit. Workforce composition and promotions will be regularly monitored to ensure equality of opportunity at all levels of the organisation. Where appropriate, steps will be taken to identify and remove unjustified barriers and to meet the special needs of disadvantaged or underrepresented groups.

Our conditions of service, benefits and facilities are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are available to all staff that should have access to them and that there are no unlawful obstacles to accessing them.

## **Discipline and Termination of Employment**

The LDE UTC will ensure that disciplinary procedures and penalties are applied without discrimination, whether they result in disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other disciplinary action.

The LDE UTC will ensure that redundancy criteria and procedures are fair and objective and are not directly or indirectly discriminatory.

## **Disability Discrimination**

If a staff member is disabled or becomes disabled, the LDE UTC will encourage them to tell the Principal or manager about their condition so that support can be provided as appropriate. If staff experience difficulties at work because of their disability, they should speak to their line manager to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. Line managers may wish to consult with staff and their medical adviser about possible adjustments. The LDE UTC will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate needs within reason. If the LDE UTC considers a particular adjustment would not be reasonable it will explain its reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible.

The LDE UTC will monitor the physical features of its premises to consider whether they place disabled workers, job applicants or service users at a substantial disadvantage compared to other staff. Where reasonable, the LDE UTC will take steps to improve access for disabled staff and service users.

## **Fixed-term employees, Casual and Agency Workers**

The LDE UTC will monitor the use of fixed-term employees, casual and agency workers, and their conditions of service, to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits, training, promotion and permanent employment opportunities. The LDE UTC will, where relevant, monitor their progress to ensure that they are accessing permanent vacancies.

## **Part-Time work**

The LDE UTC will monitor the conditions of service of part-time employees and their progression to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits and training and promotion opportunities. The LDE UTC will ensure requests to alter working hours are dealt with appropriately [under our Flexible Working Policy].

## **Breaches of this Policy**

If a member of staff believes that they may have been discriminated against they are encouraged to raise the matter through the UTC's Grievance Procedure. If a member of staff

believes that they may have been subject to harassment or bullying they are encouraged to raise the matter through the UTC's Harassment and Bullying Policy.

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure. Staff who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. False allegations which are found to have been made in bad faith will, however, be dealt with under the UTC's Disciplinary Procedure.

Any member of staff who is found to have committed an act of discrimination or harassment will be subject to disciplinary action. Such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal. The LDE UTC takes a strict approach to serious breaches of this policy.

### **Monitoring and Review of the Policy**

This policy is reviewed every two years by the LDE UTC Board.

The LDE UTC Board will continue to review the effectiveness of this policy to ensure it is achieving its objectives.

Staff are invited to comment on this policy and suggest ways in which it might be improved by contacting the Principal.