

## **QUALITY ASSURANCE DOCUMENT QA 25 – EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY**

### **1. POLICY STATEMENT**

Arden University is committed to providing equal opportunities for staff, students, applicants and all persons with whom it deals and will not tolerate any discriminatory behaviour with respect to ethnicity, race, religious belief, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender reassignment, marital status, pregnancy, maternity, age or disability, including mental health. These characteristics align with the protected characteristics defined in the Equalities Act 2010.

Arden University will continually develop strategies and procedures to tackle the varying forms of discrimination, which may occur. These will broadly fit into the following categories:

- Direct discrimination – where a person is not treated equally due to any of the characteristics listed above. This includes discrimination based on association, where a person is treated less favourably because of their association with another person who has a protected characteristic, and discrimination based on perception, where a person is treated less favourably because of a mistaken perception that they have a protected characteristic.
- Indirect discrimination – where a requirement, situation or condition, which is applied to all, has a potentially adverse effect on one or more groups.
- Harassment – where someone is subjected to unwanted conduct on the basis of one of the protected characteristics.
- Victimisation – where someone is treated less favourably due to action taken against others under equality and diversity legislation.

### **2. STUDENTS**

Arden University will offer equality of access to all its courses and will encourage the recruitment of students from the widest possible audience both nationally and internationally. This will be reinforced by:

- Marketing literature, which is produced for all courses.
- An admissions process, which is sensitive and supportive to the needs of all students, includes an enrolment process and provides for assessment of learning support for those students who may have special needs.
- The course review process will monitor the curriculum, student progress and achievement to ensure that equality of opportunity has taken place.
- All materials used for distance learning study and assessment will be subject to evaluation prior to issue to make sure that they do not contain anything which could be considered discriminatory or offensive to individual students or groups.

Statistical information regarding student equality and diversity will be provided to monitor provision and will focus primarily on:

- Enrolment data by equalities characteristics monitored by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).
- Student progression and achievement data by age, gender, SEN status and ethnicity.

### 3. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Providing access to education and learning to a wide and diverse a body of students is an integral principle of Arden University's operating ethos. Its modes of delivering higher education are designed with the diverse needs of students in mind and to provide students with flexibility and choice to help overcome some of the barriers they may face to learning. The University also recognises that individual students may have specific disability needs that may require additional support and special arrangements to be made. This policy sets out the principles by which reasonable adjustments will be made in dialogue and consultation with the student.

Arden University is committed to dealing in a fair and considerate manner with the disability needs that individual students may have and wherever possible to make reasonable adjustments to its operating procedures to accommodate those needs, whilst maintaining the integrity of the academic standards and quality of the qualifications it offers.

Special arrangements will be made on an individual basis, based on precedent, and may include, but are not limited to:

- Special arrangements in examinations
- Extra time in examinations (e.g. for students with a learning disability)
- Accessibility arrangements
- Provision of learning materials in large/or alternative formats and fonts

Students are expected to make a disability known either to their Admissions Advisor at point of application or to their Student Support team as soon as the disability becomes known to them. Arden University staff will endeavour to assess the student's needs and the implications for their study. Where appropriate, evidence may be required to support a request for special arrangements to be made.

Requests for special arrangements without precedent will be referred to the Student Affairs Committee for review or may be escalated to the Academic Board, or other body as appropriate, if they require a policy decision to be made.

### 4. STAFF



Arden University is an equal opportunity employer and is fully committed to a policy of treating all its employees and job applicants equally.

Arden 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.

The university will take all reasonable steps to employ, train and promote employees on the basis of their experience, abilities and qualifications without regard to race, colour, ethnic origin, nationality, national origin, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, marriage and civil partnership or disability. In this Policy these are known as the "protected characteristics". The university will appoint, train develop and promote on the basis of merit and ability alone. The university will also take all reasonable steps to provide a work environment in which all employees are treated with respect and dignity and that is free of harassment based upon an employee's race, colour, ethnic origin, nationality, national origin, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, marital or civil partnership status or disability. Arden will not condone any form of harassment, whether engaged in by employees or by outside third parties who do business with the university, such as clients, customers, contractors and suppliers.

Employees have a duty to co-operate to ensure that this policy is effective in ensuring equal opportunities and in preventing discrimination, harassment or bullying. Action will be taken under the university's staff disciplinary procedure against any employee who is found to have committed an act of unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying or intimidation. Serious breaches of this equal opportunities and dignity at work statement 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 university's disciplinary procedure. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may also be guilty of a criminal offence. Arden has a separate anti-harassment policy which deals with these issues and sets out how complaints of this type will be dealt with.

The university will also take appropriate action against any third parties who are found to have committed an act of unlawful harassment against its employees.

Employees should draw the attention of their line manager to suspected discriminatory acts or practices or suspected cases of harassment. Employees must not victimise or retaliate against an employee who has made allegations or complaints of discrimination or harassment or who has provided information about such discrimination or harassment. Such behaviour will be treated as potential gross misconduct in accordance with the disciplinary procedure. Employees should support colleagues who suffer such treatment and are making a complaint.

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

Arden's Staff Handbook contains detailed procedures for the recruitment, advertising, selection, promotion and payment of staff which give regard to the priorities of this policy. It also contains procedures to be followed in cases of alleged bullying.

Arden will regularly monitor the effects of selection decisions and personnel and pay practices and procedures in order to assess whether equal opportunity and dignity at work are being achieved. This will also involve considering any possible indirectly discriminatory effects of its working practices. If changes are required, the university will implement them. The university will also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability.

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Responsible SMT Lead:	Director of Student Experience
Responsible Department:	Student Experience
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