

Equality and Respect Policy

Introduction

TEP is committed to eliminating discrimination and encouraging diversity amongst our workforce and equality, diversity and inclusivity is woven into our business plan. Our aim is that our workforce will be truly representative of all sections of society and each employee feels respected and able to give of their best. We wish to create an environment in which the individual differences and the contributions of all our staff are recognized and valued. This is consistent with our company values, including those which encourage us to be honest, supportive, and responsible.

To that end the purpose of this policy is to provide equality and fairness for all in our employment and not to discriminate on grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy and maternity (the protected characteristics) or any other individual characteristic. This policy is set out to comply with the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010 (Amendment) Regulations 2023 (Amendment Regulations), the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023, Part Time Working Regulations 2000, and the Employment Act 2002. We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.

We are committed to observe as far as possible to the Equality and Human Rights Commission's Codes of Practice for:

- Employment
- Equal Pay, and
- Services, Public Functions and Associations.

All employees, whether part-time, full-time or temporary, will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which staff treat visitors, clients, suppliers, former staff members and other third parties involved in our work.

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 should be read in conjunction with our separate Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy.

This policy is fully supported by senior management and has been agreed with employee representatives.

Equal opportunities training

Managers will be given appropriate training on equal opportunities awareness and equal opportunities recruitment and selection best practice.

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.

We will take appropriate steps to accommodate the requirements of different religions or beliefs, cultures, and domestic responsibilities.

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.

Recruitment and selection

We aim to ensure that no job applicant suffers discrimination because of any of the protected characteristics above. Our recruitment procedures are reviewed regularly to ensure that individuals are treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities. Job selection criteria are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are relevant to the job and are not disproportionate.

Job advertisements should avoid stereotyping or using wording that may discourage particular groups from applying. They should include an appropriate short policy statement on equal opportunities.

We take steps to ensure that our vacancies are advertised to a diverse labour market.

Applicants should not be asked about health or disability before a job offer is made. There are limited exceptions which should only be used with the Directors' approval. 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.
- Equal opportunities monitoring (which will not form part of the decision-making process).

We are required by law to ensure that all employees are entitled to work in the UK. Assumptions about immigration status should not be made based on appearance or apparent nationality. All prospective staff, regardless of nationality, must be able to produce appropriate evidence of their right to work in the UK before employment starts, to satisfy current immigration legislation. The list of acceptable evidence is available from the PQD team.

To ensure that this policy is operating effectively, and to identify groups that may be underrepresented or disadvantaged in our organisation, we monitor applicants' ethnic group as part of the recruitment procedure. Provision of this information is voluntary and it will not adversely affect an individual's chances of recruitment or any other decision related to their employment. The information is removed from applications before shortlisting and kept in an anonymised format solely for the purposes stated in this policy. Analysing this data helps us take appropriate steps to avoid discrimination and improve equality and diversity.

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 only on the basis of merit.

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

Termination of employment

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

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

Disability discrimination

If you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can support you as appropriate.

If you experience difficulties at work because of your disability, you may wish to contact your line manager or one of the Directors to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. Your line manager or the Director may wish to consult with you and your medical adviser(s) about possible adjustments. We will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate your needs within reason. If we consider a particular adjustment would not be reasonable, we will explain our reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible.

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

Fixed-term employees and agency workers

We monitor our use of fixed-term employees 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. We will, where relevant, monitor their progress to ensure that they are accessing permanent vacancies when available.

Part-time work

We 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. We will ensure requests to alter working hours are dealt with appropriately under our Flexible Working Policy.

Breaches of the policy

If you believe that you may have been discriminated against you are encouraged to raise the matter through our Grievance Procedure. If you believe that you may have been subject to harassment you are encouraged to raise the matter in accordance with our Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy. If you are uncertain which applies or need advice on how to proceed you should speak confidentially to PQD, your line manager or to one of the Directors.

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 our 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. We take a strict approach to serious breaches of this policy.

Date of Next Review: December 2025



Person with overall responsibility	Nicola Hancock, Director
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Rev	Date	Description of Amendment	Authorised by
00	November 2011	Original Issue	Francis Hesketh
01	January 2013	Review and addition of Person with Overall Responsibility	Francis Hesketh
02	March 2013	Update footer and change font to Arial	Francis Hesketh
03	21 January 2015	Update footer and formatting to standard TEP paragraph spacing	Francis Hesketh

04	June 2015	Update header & footer	Graeme Atherton
05	January 2017	Scheduled review, no amendments	Francis Hesketh
06	January 2019	Changed Business Support for PQD	Joanne Boothroyd
07	October 2021	Updated protected characteristics. Also updated to reflect new TEP branding	Elizabeth Seal
08	December 2022	No amendments required.	Katie Shilcock
09	December 2023	Scheduled review, includes reference to updated legislation and appropriate evidence of right to work in UK	Nicola Hancock
09	December 2024	Scheduled review, no amendments required	Nicola Hancock