



## Equality and Diversity Policy

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This policy has been developed to ensure that Open Awards is able to meet the regulatory requirements which flow through the design and regulations for the QCF, units and qualifications.

The statements have been developed following development of the organisation's policies and procedures and how these meet or go towards meeting the regulatory requirements.

Open Awards recognises that a commitment to Equality and Diversity is not a point in time statement but a commitment to a long term and continual review of policies, practice and performance which reflects a set of underlying values which inform and guide the working practices and policy formulation of the organisation.

The policy and implementation of the policy are therefore a signal of that commitment and Open Awards will endeavour to monitor, review and evaluate its performance against the policy through its management, governance and self-assessment reporting.

### The Open Awards Equality and Diversity Policy

#### 1. Regulatory Requirements

The regulations governing the QCF state:

***'The system must be fair and equal to ensure that wherever possible all learners with the relevant skills, knowledge and understanding can have their achievement recognised'***<sup>1</sup>

The regulations therefore cover the design and development of units and qualifications, the assessment and verification activities, the award of credit and all working practices which support these activities. All staff of Open Awards need to be aware of the regulatory requirements and how these affect their job role and their interaction with centres and learners.

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<sup>1</sup> Regulatory arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework – August 2008

## **2 Application of the Policy**

2.1 The intended audience for this document is:

- All Open Awards staff and trustees
- centre staff responsible for Curriculum Development and Quality Assurance and administration of Open Awards qualifications
- Open Awards appointed External Verifiers
- key stakeholders involved in the development of Open Awards provision
- trainers working on behalf of Open Awards.

2.2 This policy applies to:

- units and qualifications approved under the QCF including support and assessment methodologies and materials
- Access to HE Diploma approved by QAA
- centre approval processes
- publicity and marketing materials
- development events run by and/or on behalf of Open Awards

## **3 Introduction**

- 3.1 Open Awards is committed to being an equal opportunities organisation. Open Awards is opposed to discrimination on any grounds, including those of race, language, colour, nationality, ethnicity, regional or national origin, gender, rurality, sexual orientation, marital status, age, religious belief, disability or social background.
- 3.2 Open Awards will work with organisations to develop good practice in the creation of additional educational opportunities for groups currently under-represented. Positive action strategies will include the promotion of good practice in educational provision.

## **4 Policy**

- 4.1 Open Awards will ensure that equality of opportunity is promoted in access to our products and services and that unfair or unlawful discrimination, whether direct or indirect is eliminated.
- 4.2 Open Awards will ensure that:
- the widest possible diversity of candidates can access the content and assessment of our products and services

- representatives of learners will be involved in the approval of qualifications and units to ensure that barriers to entry or participation are mitigated
- access to equality of opportunity in assessment is expressed within the Open Awards' Access to Fair Assessment policy
- information regarding the application of reasonable adjustments is recorded, monitored and used to inform future developments
- entry requirements, content and assessment demands of products and services will be appropriate to the knowledge, understanding and skills specified and will not act as unnecessary barriers to achievement
- language used in all materials will be clear, free from bias and appropriate to the target group
- Quality Reviewers and External Verifiers are trained to identify issues relating to equality and diversity especially in the application of assessment
- review meetings will be held to provide an opportunity for dialogue with centres on ways to enhance curriculum, resources and assessment practice in line with both Open Awards and the centre's own equal opportunities policy
- published and/or endorsed materials reflect the equality and diversity policy
- all products and services are reviewed against this policy.

#### 4.3 Open Awards approved centres will be required to:

- ensure that all processes concerned with assessment are carried out in a fair and objective manner
- adhere to legislation regarding equality and diversity
- operate an effective equality and diversity policy, with which learners are familiar and which is applied to all learners using Open Awards products and services
- operate an effective appeals procedure, with which learners are familiar and which is applied to all learners using Open Awards products and services.

- 4.4 Open Awards will review the policy annually and revise it as and when necessary in response to customer and stakeholder feedback, changes in practice, requirements of the Qualifications Regulators or external agencies or changes in legislation. The review will ensure that procedures continue to be consistent with the regulatory criteria and are applied properly and fairly.