



Changing lives through learning

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

1. Purpose

Open Awards is committed to being an equal opportunity and inclusive organisation. It is our aim to provide equality of opportunity within our organisation and in all products and services we provide. We also expect all our approved providers to support this aim when delivering our products and services to learners¹.

We oppose all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination, including discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, social background, employment status, domestic circumstances, ability, or any other relevant status or characteristic.

We will ensure that our policies, practices, products and services comply with the Equality Act 2010 and protect individuals from discrimination in relation to all protected characteristics.

2. Scope

This document is applicable for the following Open Awards products and services:

- ✓ Ofqual regulated qualifications and units
- ✓ Qualifications Wales qualifications
- ✓ Access to HE Diplomas
- ✓ Quality Endorsed Courses
- ✓ Apprenticeship Assessment
- ✓ Badge of Excellence Programs
- ✓ Micro-credentials.

3. Regulatory Authorities

The relevant regulatory authorities for our products and services are Ofqual, Qualifications Wales and Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). Every attempt has been made to ensure that the provisions of this document are consistent with the requirements of these regulatory authorities together with Charity Commission guidance.

Where the requirements of a regulatory authority change, or where inadvertently this policy conflicts with those of the regulatory authority, the latter shall apply. Where the requirements of the regulatory authority are amended and require changes to this document, such changes will be made as soon as practicable and Open Awards will inform providers accordingly.

Where additional services are commissioned from Open Awards the contractual

¹ In this policy, the term 'learner' includes apprentices.
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terms shall apply until such time as this policy is amended.

4. Audience

This document is for use by the following:

Staff at Approved Providers responsible for curriculum development, delivery, quality assurance and administration of Open Awards products and services.

- Open Awards
 - All staff
 - Trustees and committee members
 - Access to HE Moderators
 - External Quality Assurers
 - Specialist EQA Reviewers
 - Examiners
 - Remote Invigilators
 - Apprenticeship assessors
 - Subject experts
 - Key suppliers where they act on behalf of Open Awards

5. Definitions

Equality	Ensuring everybody has an equal opportunity, and is not treated differently or discriminated against because of their characteristics or beliefs.
Diversity	Taking account of the differences between people and groups of people, and placing a positive value on those differences.
Equality of opportunity	Ensuring everybody has an equal chance to access, participate in and benefit from opportunities on offer and to fulfil their potential.
Protected characteristics	Specific aspects of a person's identity defined and protected by the Equality Act 2010. This means individuals are protected from discrimination relating to these characteristics. The nine protected characteristics are: • Age • Disability • Gender Reassignment • Marriage and Civil Partnership • Pregnancy and Maternity • Race • Religion and Belief • Sex • Sexual Orientation
Direct discrimination	Direct discrimination is when a person is treated less favourably than others because of a protected characteristic (e.g., age, disability, race, sex) as defined under the Equality Act 2010. This includes discrimination because a person is perceived to have a protected characteristic, or because they are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic.
Indirect discrimination	Indirect discrimination occurs when a policy, rule, or practice appears to apply equally to everyone but disadvantages a specific group sharing a protected characteristic (e.g., race, gender, religion, age). It may be unintentional but is unlawful unless it can be justified as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

6. Policy

Open Awards aims to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion are promoted in the development of, and access to our products and services, and that unlawful or unfair discrimination, whether direct or indirect, is prevented and addressed.

We recognise that all employees, representatives and staff at approved providers have a responsibility to support the intentions of this policy and provide their staff

with appropriate training and guidance as necessary.

Open Awards will ensure that:

- the widest possible range of learners can access the content and assessment of our products and services
- entry requirements, content and assessment demands will be appropriate to the knowledge, understanding and skills specified and not create unnecessary barriers to achievement
- all products and services allow for the fair assessment of all learners
- language used in all materials is clear, inclusive, free from bias and appropriate to the intended audience
- materials are developed to avoid unnecessary offence, bias or stereotyping
- all products and services are reviewed in line with this policy
- staff and other representatives are trained to identify and address issues relating to equality, diversity and inclusion especially in the application of assessment
- we act fairly when working with providers, learners and other stakeholders
- we support and demonstrate the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion in our activities
- approved providers are aware of and understand their responsibilities in relation to this policy
- apprenticeship policies and assessment methods identify and address any adverse or potential adverse effect on learners and take appropriate account of individual learner needs.

7. Responsibility of approved providers

Open Awards approved providers are required to:

- ensure that all assessment activities are carried out in a fair and objective manner
- comply with current and relevant equality legislation
- operate an effective equality, diversity and inclusion 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
- ensure that all staff involved in the design, delivery, management, assessment and quality assurance of Open Awards products and services are aware of, and familiar with, the contents of this policy and that learners are made aware of the aspects of the policy relevant to them.

8. Monitoring and Review

Open Awards will review this policy every two years as part of its self-evaluation arrangements. The policy will also be revised when necessary in response to provider, learner and stakeholder feedback, changes in Open Awards practices, advice from the regulatory authorities or external agencies, or changes in legislation.

As part of monitoring learners registering on Open Awards qualifications we will collect and monitor information on diversity, requests for reasonable adjustments and special considerations, access arrangements and feedback from learners, providers and other stakeholders. Where issues are identified which suggest our products or services may have adversely impacted learners, we will review our provision to consider amendments to units, qualifications and internal procedures as necessary.

9. Related documents

This policy should also be read in conjunction with the following Open Awards documents:

- Provider Agreement
- Provider Handbook
- Access to HE Provider Handbook
- Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy and Procedures
- Recognition of Prior Learning Policy and Procedures
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (Staff)

10. Regulatory Requirements

This Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy is designed to comply with the requirements of our relevant regulatory authorities, including, but not limited to:

Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition and Qualifications Wales

- C2 Arrangements with centres (providers)
- D1 Fitness for purpose of qualifications
- D2 Accessibility of qualifications
- G2 Language of the assessment
- G3 Use of language and Stimulus Materials
- G6 Arrangements for Reasonable Adjustments

QAA The Access to Higher Education Conditions

- D1.2 - Accessibility of Diplomas
- E2: Assessment design

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