



Equal Opportunities Policy

Equal Opportunity Statement

The College is fully committed to delivering equal opportunities for staff and students and whole-heartedly supports the principle of ensuring equal opportunities for staff entering employment and throughout their working life at the college and for the initial admission of students' progress and throughout their studies. We believe that it is in the College's and our students' best interests, as well as all of those who work with us, to ensure that all human resources, talents, skills and abilities which are available throughout the community are fully considered when recruiting staff students and trainees and when employment opportunities arise. Senior managers fully support this policy statement. All employees, agents and students are responsible for playing their part in achieving its objectives.

Selection, Recruitment and Career Development (Staff)

The College opposes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination on the grounds of colour, race, ethnic or national origin, gender, sexuality, marital status, political or religious affiliation, age, or disability. In selecting the above groups, our policy goes further than the legislative requirements on race, gender and disability by specifying age, political and religious affiliation and sexual orientation. Furthermore, the College seeks to ensure equality of opportunity for career development through the usage of the appraisal system applying the same criteria of fairness to the aforementioned groups.

ICON College of Technology and Management is fully committed to conform to the requirements of the Equality Act (2010) and all past legislation going back to the Disability Discrimination Act (1995), the Race Relations Act (1976) and the Sex Discrimination Act (1975). Drawing on the requirements of the legislation, the College ensures that it neither directly nor indirectly discriminates against staff or on grounds that are not relevant to the job.

Every possible step will be taken to ensure that individuals applying for jobs or seeking promotion are treated equally and fairly and that decisions on recruitment, selection, training, promotion and career management of staff, students, are based solely on objective, job-related criteria.

E.O. Recruitment Methodology (Staff)

In order to ensure fair selection and recruitment of staff, the College draws up a Job Specification, accompanied by a Job Description and Person Specification. The Person Specification is produced to protect against unfair discrimination. Prior to recruitment, the interviewing panel produce a specification of essential and desirable criteria. These criteria are tested to ensure that candidates are not directly unfairly discriminated against by the application of unreasonable criteria. At the same time, the College ensures that criteria are not inserted where less of a group could comply and the criteria were irrelevant to the job. In appointing a candidate, the interviewing panel will keep records of every interview and be in a position to fully justify every selection and rejection of specific candidates. The College will be able on request, to provide written reasons why a candidate was rejected.

Selection and Recruitment: Admissions (Students)

On student admissions, the College is committed to ensuring that its selection, admissions and enrolment procedures actively promote equality and fairness. The College does not discriminate either directly or indirectly against an applicants' age, race, ethnic or national origin, gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, disability, or any other category where discrimination cannot be reasonably justified.

Students with a protected characteristic (as defined by the Equality Act 2010) will not, when they are applying for, or undertaking one of our qualifications, be disadvantaged in comparison to students who do not share that characteristic. *[Please also see the Access and Participation Plan]*

Equal Opportunities (Access and Participation)

The College's approach to Equality & Diversity is designed to cover the Protected Characteristics cited in the Equality Act 2010 covering disadvantaged groups, and extends beyond simple compliance with the law. The College is fully aware of its legal responsibilities under the Act and also under the relevant protocols of the European Convention on Human Rights, to which the UK is a signatory. In this respect the College has produced an Access and Participation Plan fully committed to support fair and equal access to study to a range of disadvantaged groups. The College is focussing on fair access and success and future employability of the following under-represented groups in the EO Policy and the APP.

- BAME
- Mature students
- Disabled students.
- Care leavers
- Young disadvantaged white males age 18-21

The College ensures that our EO policy and our APP interact together. The equal opportunity statement in the policy underpins how it intends to implement the APP ensuring that we focus on fair and equal practices. The College is delivering a report to the Academic Board identifying how the Equal Opportunities Policy impacts on our APP and this requires continuous monitoring, particularly in the light of the Equality Act 2010 and its emphasis on protected characteristics. We are confident that the College's policy contributes to the fulfilment of our APP objectives in the following ways:

- a) Ensuring the fair selection of students for admission or staff for jobs without regard to marital status, race, ethnic origin, colour, religion, sexual orientation, social background or other irrelevant distinction.
- b) Promoting widening participation and fair access to further and higher education for BAME, disabled students and in future care leavers and young disadvantaged white males age 18-21.
- c) Providing a supportive working and learning environment which enables disabled staff and students to achieve their full potential and making reasonable adjustments where necessary for disabled students.
- d) Delivering a positive learning environment free from discrimination, harassment, or victimisation where all members of the College community are treated with respect and dignity.

The College through its EO policy implementation, effective monitoring and review by both Academic Board and Board of Governors seeks to ensure that different under-represented groups will not suffer barriers to recruitment and/or reduced employment opportunities. The EO policy reinforces the APP, which provides (where necessary) immediate support through the bursary system and provision of supportive physical resources and access to tutorial and student support networks. The College will take every opportunity to investigate such intersections to inform its data collection.

The EO Policy, through the APP ensures that the tutorial system will be vigorously applied to support any barriers or challenges a student may face. These measures will be applied stringently to disadvantaged groups of students.

At the same time, whilst there are equal opportunities policies in place, race and sex discrimination is

often indirect and unacknowledged. Mentoring is crucial and we have many student alumni from ethnic minorities to support ethnic students as well as many years of institutional experience, delivering learning to ethnic minorities. The disabled student in alternative providers nationally suffers from poor access to facilities in the case of a physically disabled student through to often an unsympathetic learning and teaching strategy, particularly for students with dyslexia and/or dyspraxia.

Having recognised the barriers listed above, the EO Policy and the APP requires the College to put in place an access course to prepare under-represented groups with poor qualifications and low self esteem with the academic skills required, enabling them to progress onto level 4 and thus offer fair access.

The policy requires the College to have an Academic Adviser covering equal opportunities and student careers. Over the course of the next year, the College will develop its data collection capabilities in line with E.O. and APP requirements. The data provided on the dashboard focuses on the following:

- a) Access for selected under-represented groups.
- b) Success for selected under-represented groups.
- c) Continuation for selected under-represented groups.
- d) Attainment for selected under-represented groups.
- e) Progression for selected under-represented groups.

Implementation

In order to put this policy of equal opportunities into practice in the day-to-day operation of the College, (overseen by the Board of Governance) the College will:

- Maintain an action plan containing explicit, measurable and achievable objectives.
- Provide training and guidance for our recruitment consultants and those involved in management and personnel practices.
- Examine and keep under review procedures for recruitment, selection, promotion and training.
- Develop mechanisms for resolving grievances about alleged unfair discrimination or harassment.
- Identify any scope for using lawful positive action for training and encouragement, and, where possible, implement the necessary arrangements.
- Review and, if necessary, revise the policy on a regular basis. and regular monitoring, evaluation and review of the Access and Participation Plan.
- Continuously review the College's approach to admissions.
- Ensure the learning, teaching and assessment strategy continues to meet the needs of all students, including those with disadvantage.