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EQUALITY POLICY

ICOM complies fully, and insofar as it is required to do so, with the relevant sections of The Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Act 2000, Employment and Industrial Relations Act 2002, The Equality for Men and Women Act 2003, Equal Treatment of Persons Order 2007 and all other Maltese legislation for the time being in force relating to Equality.

1. PURPOSE

1.1 ICOM is committed to valuing diversity and the promotion of equality of opportunity for all its users. We are also committed to working with National Commission for the Promotion of Equality, and all partners to promote community harmony and social cohesion. The College will challenge all forms of inequality, discrimination and harassment, and actively promote opportunities for the protected groups mentioned in Appendix A of this policy. This work is regarded as the responsibility of all staff, learners, governors and partner organisations of the College.

1.2 The purpose of this policy is to provide equality of opportunity to all who study with and work for and with ICOM including those who are defined as having any protected characteristic as listed in Appendix A. The College expresses its opposition to all forms of prejudice, inequality and discrimination. Discrimination can take many forms and a comprehensive list covered by this policy is attached as Appendix B.

1.3 The College will seek positively to remove conditions and barriers which place people at a disadvantage and will actively promote equality for all and celebrate diversity. To do this, the College will monitor its performance against targets set for Workplace diversity and to narrow the achievement gaps of our learners. An annual equality annual report will be published to highlight progress made against these targets and highlight further gaps identified. We will ensure all our procedures for both staff and learners are open and easily accessible.

1.4 All learners and staff will be supported to develop their full potential within an ethos reflecting the equal status of all members of the College.

2. SCOPE

2.1 This policy applies to all our learners, and staff respectively and operates within the framework of the college. As a responsible body, the College recognises and accepts its vicarious liability for the actions of staff, learners, contractors and subcontractors. The College will comply with all legislation, regulations, statutory and non-statutory codes of practice and its contractual requirements relating to equality and diversity.

2.2 Any action by an individual employed by the College, or by a learner or learners which contravene this policy renders them liable for disciplinary action. Evidence of discrimination or harassment may be considered as gross misconduct and this will be actioned via the appropriate policy for staff and for students.

2.3 The College is keen to develop a culture that goes beyond compliance with the law i.e. one that is fully inclusive, promotes equality and embraces diversity. This policy describes how the College will fulfil its statutory duties and also how it will develop its practices.

2.4 The Equality Duty has three general aims:

- I. To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts;
- II. To advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
- III. To foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

3 ACCESSIBILITY

3.1 All key materials used to market learning and employment opportunities will explicitly convey our positive attitude to equality and diversity and be made accessible in alternative formats on request. Means of distribution will be kept under review to ensure information reaches those who do not traditionally respond to learning and employment opportunities within the College.

3.2 Guidance and admissions procedures will be clear and transparent and free from unfair discrimination.

4 CURRICULUM

4.1 A dynamic portfolio of relevant study programmes will be offered which are responsive to learner need and enables learners to study at the appropriate level with good prospects for success and progression. Progression routes will be clearly published and advice given impartially.

4.2 Induction procedures which familiarise learners with the College's policy and commitment to equality and diversity will be delivered to all learners via the tutorial programmes and cross College activities.

4.3 Inclusive learning practices which acknowledge individual learner's starting points and preferred learning styles and which offer a variety of assessment strategies will permeate the delivery of provision.

4.4 Learning materials which are free from bias, which celebrate diversity and challenge stereotyping will be used throughout the curriculum whenever possible.

4.5 Cultural awareness and the fostering of good relations and equality for all protected groups will be integrated into the curriculum, as will literacy, numeracy and language skills.

4.6 The provision of additional learning support will be determined based on the assessment of the each individual student's support requirements and will have due consideration to the application of reasonable adjustments and the college's anticipatory duties.

5 EMPLOYMENT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

5.1 Equality of opportunity will exist for all existing and potential staff in relation to recruitment, development opportunities and promotion.

5.2 Monitoring data is gathered, analysed and actions taken to improve processes and equality as part of the recruitment process. Data in relation to staffing profile, recruitment and selection processes, staff training opportunities and staff promotion is published annually and reported on through the governance structure.

5.3 Any allegation of discrimination will be investigated thoroughly and action taken if necessary.

5.4 The College will be proactive in offering staff the opportunity to disclose a disability and supporting them to do so.

5.5 Reasonable adjustments will be made for staff who are, or who become, disabled during their period of employment.

6 MONITORING AND REVIEWING

6.1 The policy will be monitored through the Equality Committee.

6.2 The Committee will be chaired by the Quality Manager who has responsibility for the review of the policy, monitoring its effectiveness and measuring its impact.

6.3 The effectiveness of the policy will be reviewed through:

- I. Regular analysis of learner participation, retention, achievement, success and progression by reported protected characteristics.
- II. Regular analysis of the staffing profile in relation to recruitment; levels of responsibility.
- III. Regular analysis of access to professional development opportunities and to promotion for all staff including those with protected characteristics.

7 RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Equality Objectives¹

Admissions Policy²

¹ Appendix 47. Equality Objectives.

² Appendix 48. Admissions Policy

8 RESPONSIBILITIES

8.1 All individuals within ICOM, including staff, learners, customers and governors are responsible to ensure the observation of the principles of this policy. This relates to the treatment of others so that the environment in which we operate is free from prejudice and discrimination.

8.2 The Governing Board will receive regular reports assessing progress and measuring impacts. They will also receive training in relation to the relevant legislation.

8.3 This policy will be overseen by the Quality Manager and will be monitored by the Principal and the Governing Board.

8.4 The Principal supported by the Board of Governors will take responsibility for ensuring that the principles outlined in this policy will be integrated throughout their strategic and operational decision-making process ensuring full compliance with equality legislation.

8.5 The Quality Manager is responsible for:

- I. policy development, implementation and monitoring to ensure compliance with legal obligations.
- II. ii ensuring the formal monitoring and review of this policy in line with relevant good practice.
- III. monitoring the equality action plan to ensure progress in meeting the equality objectives outlined in the plan.

8.6 All staff employed by the College will have access to regular mandatory training opportunities to ensure that they understand the principles implicit in this policy and the relevant legislation. The induction programme for new staff will include such training.

8.7 All users of the College and contractors will be expected to adhere to the central tenets of this policy.

8.8 Breaches of the policy by staff or learners will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

8.9. The Equality Committee will include wide representation of staff and learners from across the college.

9 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

ICOM is committed to the promotion of equality and diversity and to providing a supportive environment for all members of our community. Our commitment means that this policy has been reviewed to ensure that it does not discriminate (either intentionally or unintentionally) against any of the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender (including gender identity), race, religion, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity or sexual orientation and meets our obligations under the Maltese Equality law. Therefore, this policy has no adverse impact on any of the above protected groups.

Appendix A

Protected characteristics

1.1 The protected characteristics:

Age

Disability

Gender reassignment

Marriage and civil partnership

Pregnancy and maternity

Race

Religion or belief

Sex

Sexual orientation

[Each protected characteristic is defined below.](#)

1.2 Age: A reference in the Act to a person who has the protected characteristic of age is a reference to a person of a particular age group or a person who shares a particular age group. An 'age group' is a group of persons defined by reference to age, whether to a particular age or a range of ages. The College must not discriminate against any employee or student because of his/her age or to the age group they belong to.

1.3 Disability: A person is defined as disabled if he/she has a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Physical or mental impairment includes sensory impairments.

1.4 Gender reassignment: References to transsexual people covers employees or students who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone a process (or part of a process) to reassign their sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex, i.e. gender reassignment. There is no requirement that the process of gender reassignment includes medical supervision. It is recognised that there may be differences between physical sex and gender identity.

1.5 Marriage and civil partnership: The College must not discriminate against any employees or students because they are married or are in a civil partnership. Marriage will cover any formal union of a man and woman which is legally recognised in Malta as a marriage. A civil partnership refers to a registered civil partnership of a same sex couple under the Civil Unions Act 2014. People who are married or in a civil partnership are protected against discrimination on this ground.

1.6 Pregnancy and maternity: The College must not treat a woman unfavourably because of her pregnancy or related illness, or because she is on maternity leave or seeking to take maternity leave. The College must also not discriminate against an employee because of his/her association with a woman who is pregnant or who has recently given birth.

1.7 Race: The College must not discriminate against any employee or student because of his/her colour, nationality or ethnic or national origins.

1.8 Religion or belief: The College must not discriminate against any employee or student because of his/her religion or philosophical belief, or because of his/her lack of religion or belief.

1.9 Gender: The College must not discriminate against any employee because of his/her gender.

1.10 Sexual orientation: Employees or students must not be discriminated against because of their sexual orientation, whether that be towards:

people of the same gender (i.e. the employee is a gay man or a lesbian);

people of the opposite gender (i.e. the employee is heterosexual);

people of both genders (i.e. the employee is bisexual).