



ICM

Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy

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Statement of Intent

ICM is committed to openness and accountability. In line with this commitment we expect employees, Learners, Examiners or those contracted to provide services to ICM who have serious concerns about any aspect of our work to come forward and voice those concerns with the knowledge that, if made in good faith, their action will be viewed positively.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Adair Ford". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A'.

Adair Ford
Chairman & CEO

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1. Policy Statement

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society, it is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of their age, being or becoming a transsexual person, being married or in a civil partnership, being pregnant or on maternity leave, disability, race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion, belief or lack of religion/belief, sex, or sexual orientation, therefore these are called 'protected characteristics'. ICM encourage those who feel they have been unfairly discriminated against to take action. This policy sets out the reasons for and actions that can be taken.

2. Introduction

As an Awarding Body, ICM is committed to providing equal opportunities in employment and for Learners by ensuring that the principles of equal opportunities and diversity are an integral part of all activities from the development, delivery and award of our qualifications and to avoiding unlawful discrimination against employees and Learners following its qualifications. This statement sets out our Equal Opportunity and Diversity Policy and the standards our employees, contractors, Learners and Approved Centres are entitled to expect as a minimum.

3. Equal Opportunities and Diversity at ICM

ICM values diversity and will ensure that individuals are treated in a fair, just and equal manner, regardless of gender, gender identity, marital status, race, religion, political beliefs, colour, age, disability, sexual orientation, ethnic or national origin, socio-economic background, trade union membership or any other unjustifiable criteria.

As an employer, ICM will not tolerate discrimination in any area of employment or in the provision of services to Approved Centres, Learners or potential Learners. Every ICM employee, or individuals/ organisations contracted to provide services on behalf of ICM, have a personal responsibility for implementing and promoting the Institute's approach to equal opportunities.

With regard to our Learners, ICM aims to ensure that potential and actual candidates who are over the age of 18 (the minimum age for study) are treated fairly based on merit regardless of disability, gender, nationality, race, religious or political views or affiliations, sexual orientation or socio-economic background. ICM requires Approved Centres to treat all students in the same way. (Guidance is provided to Centres in the Approved Centre Handbook). Our qualifications are developed with an aim of addressing disadvantages in student learning, and attainment and issues in student satisfaction in relation to protected characteristics.

4. Responsibility for Equal Opportunities within ICM

Overall responsibility for equal opportunities and diversity within ICM lies with the ICM Board of Trustees. Responsibility for implanting the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy lies with the senior management team. ICM is committed to its Equal Opportunity statement and to ensuring that this policy is applied in full. ICM will take steps to monitor its implementation and will carry out reviews, making alterations when and where necessary.

5. ICM priorities

ICM has three overriding priorities in relation to equal opportunities:

1. To develop qualifications which conform to accessibility and quality criteria and in relation to protected characteristics
2. To ensure that qualifications are based on national standards and are accessible to all candidates who have the potential to achieve them
3. To work in partnership with Approved Centres, colleges, universities, employers and training providers to ensure that all candidates enjoy equality of access to our qualifications

These priorities and the commitment of ICM to equal opportunities will be taken forward through the Institute's approach to:

- The Learner
- The requirements of Approved Centres
- Qualification development, delivery and award
- Recruitment literature
- Learner selection
- Employment practice

6. The Learner

ICM aims to establish a provision as closely suited as possible to the educational and vocational training needs of Learners on a basis of equal opportunity for all, in order to widen participation and promote social inclusion in education.

7. The Approved Centres

ICM promotes equality of opportunity for its Learners by requiring Approved Centres to demonstrate, as part of the recognition process to deliver qualifications, that:

- They have an up-to-date equal opportunities policy in place
- There are information and recording systems enabling Learners' achievements to be monitored and reviewed in relation to the Approved Centre's equal opportunities policy
- That equipment and accommodation used for learning and assessment are appropriate

8. Qualification Design

ICM recognises the importance of the educational process in the development of individuals and this is reflected in the choice of texts, syllabuses and assessment materials. ICM will aim to ensure access to learning and assessment by all Learners in the following ways:

- Bias in content to, discrimination against, and barriers to any one group in the use of language as well as nature of content are avoided
- Assessment methods which do not put up unnecessary barriers to specific groups of Learners are employed
- New qualifications are scrutinised by an approval panel which considers the provision of equality of opportunity whilst ensuring that the integrity of the qualification has not been compromised
- Assessment materials are reviewed to ensure these are no unnecessary barriers or bias
- Encouraging perspectives which reflect the cultural diversity of society and which are neither gender dominated nor ethnocentric

9. Recruitment Literature

The literature provided by ICM will use non-discriminatory language and the recruitment literature provided by Approved Centres should not discourage applications from under-represented groups. In addition, literature produced by Approved Centres should provide realistic guidance on the costs that students can expect to face and of any financial support arrangements available to them.

10. Learner Selection

ICM encourages Approved Centres to select the course most suited to Learners and in line with ICM APL and Reasonable Adjustment and Special Considerations Policy.

Approved Centres will, primarily, use a Learner's academic qualifications as the primary source of evidence in the assessment of aptitude. Other evidence in the Learner's record may also be relevant as reliance on academic qualifications alone for the assessment of aptitude to the exclusion of other factors may be discriminatory.

ICM recommends that in assessing academic aptitude, Approved Centres should consider the following:

- ICM recognises a range of qualifications as meeting the general entry requirement for a specific programme of study
- The level of non-academic support, which an applicant will require, is specifically excluded from consideration
- Previous and predicted pre-entry examination results should be regarded as the primary evidence in assessing a Learners potential
- Wherever possible, explicit selection criteria will be established in order to eliminate subjectivity and to provide a framework for fair selection
- Academic and other staff dealing with admissions should be aware of and conform to ICM's Equal Opportunities Policy relating to Learners

11. Learners with Particular Requirements

ICM's objective is to provide a fair method of assessment for equality of opportunity to all Learners. Approved Centres are requested to make special arrangements for Learners with known disabilities, to compensate for the restrictions imposed by the disability without affecting the validity of examinations and assessments. For more information, Approved Centres should refer to the document "Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy" which is available on the ICM website.

12. Staff and Academics

All ICM staff and examiners will use language which is non-discriminatory and should not cause offence to particular groups in the course of teaching, learning or daily business. Administrative and academic staff at Approved Centres are encouraged to do likewise. It is however a fundamental principle of academic freedom that reasoned argument may be employed to test and challenge views, opinions and assertions of all kinds, and in no circumstances may this clause be used to discourage or prevent the exercise of that freedom.

ICM encourages Approved Centres to take account of the needs of individual Learners and, wherever reasonably practicable within existing constraints, to give consideration to personal issues when lectures and examinations are timetabled.

13. Services and Facilities

ICM supports the principle of equal access by all of its Learners in groups or as individuals to the services and facilities it offers and those offered by Approved Centres.

14. Monitoring

ICM will monitor the implementation of this policy through:

- Reports from ICM Regional Coordinators and their visits to Approved Centres
- Enquiries on results and appeals
- Complaints procedure
- Agendas and minutes from the EPRC
- Recruitment monitoring
- Appraisals
- Reports to the ICM senior management team

This policy will be reviewed every two years.

15. Legislation

In promoting equal opportunities all relevant legislation will be taken into account including the following:

15.1 Equality Act 2010

This Act provides a “legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunities for all”.

15.2 The Human Rights Act 1998

In the UK this outlines certain fundamental rights and freedoms contained in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

15.3 Protection from Harassment Act 1997 (amended 2012)

This Act makes it a criminal offence to pursue a course of conduct, which amounts to harassment of a person.

15.4 Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 (amended 2006)

This gives people with disabilities rights in areas such as employment, education, and access to goods, facilities & services.

15.5 Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001

These acts deal with discrimination against disabled people – that is, when someone treats a disabled person less favourably than someone else, without justification, for a reason related to their disability. Discrimination also occurs if, without justification, a ‘reasonable adjustment’ is not made.

15.6 Race Relations Act 1976 and Race Relations Amendment Act 2000

This makes discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, nationality (including citizenship), and ethnic or national origin unlawful. The law covers people from all racial groups, including white people.