

Equality, diversity and inclusion policy

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1. Purpose

The WEA is a democratic membership organisation with charitable status that provides adults with educational opportunities to develop intellectual understanding, confidence and social and collective responsibility:

- ▶ The WEA has Memorandum and Articles of Association which commit the Association to take positive steps towards implementing equalities practices in all areas of its work;
- ▶ The Association will meet all statutory obligations under relevant legislation (Equality Act 2010) and where appropriate, anticipate future legal requirements signaled under EU directives and national legislation;
- ▶ This policy is intended to underpin a range of explicit and detailed associated policies, protocols and procedures which together ensure the effective implementation and monitoring of equalities measures within the organisation at all levels;
- ▶ The policy sets out our commitment to providing outstanding teaching, support and services to the diverse communities we serve through our strategic intent and operational plans;
- ▶ The policy operates within the context of the Equality Act 2010;
- ▶ The WEA promotes a diverse workforce and is committed to the equal treatment of employees and job applicants in all its employment practices, in accordance with relevant equality legislation and codes of practice;
- ▶ The WEA strives hard to ensure that no employee or potential employee will receive less favourable treatment due to their age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race (including colour, nationality, ethnic origin and caste), religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, part time or fixed term employment status or membership or non-membership of a trade union.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the harassment policy.

This policy is not contractual and is subject to change.

2. Scope

This policy applies to volunteers, students, delivery partners, subcontractors and participants in activity arranged under the auspices of the WEA and to all job applicants and employees of WEA. An employee is defined as anyone with a contract of employment, including core staff and tutors.

This policy also applies to agency workers provided to WEA by a temporary work agency and self-employed contractors.

All employees, job applicants, agency workers and contractors will be referred to as “employees” throughout this Policy.

3. Responsibilities

The responsibility for equality, diversity and inclusion lies with everyone. The WEA will ensure that staff, tutors, volunteers, members and students are made aware of the policy and understand their personal responsibilities as well as the Association’s collective approaches to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion and its commitment to inclusive learning.

Governance:

- ▶ Ultimate responsibility for the implementation of the equality and diversity measures lies with the Trustees of the Association. It is their role to oversee senior management through performance management systems. The equality and diversity scrutiny panel (EDSP) monitors and reviews equality and diversity measures on behalf of the Trustees.

Management:

- ▶ Managers are responsible for complying with the principles and processes as detailed within this policy and ensuring the content and requirements are communicated to any new employees, or other parties covered within the scope of the policy.

HR:

- ▶ HR are responsible for advising managers and employees on the application of this policy, ensuring best practice and legal compliance at all times.

Individual staff:

All employees are required to read and abide by the terms of this policy. In order to ensure that the equality and diversity policy is put into practice individual members of staff should:

- ▶ Seek actively to promote equality, diversity and inclusion in all areas of their work;
- ▶ Respond to individual needs of those they work with (including students, other staff, volunteers etc.);
- ▶ Foster an environment in which compliance with this policy is regarded as integral to their work;
- ▶ Work to tackle and effectively eliminate bullying, harassment and discrimination;
- ▶ Not victimise any person who has complained, including complaints of harassment or unfair discrimination, or who has given information in connection with such a complaint.

Students and volunteers:

- ▶ All students and volunteers are responsible for adhering to the code of conduct and treating others with courtesy and respect.

4. Definitions

Equality	Individuals are treated equally, regardless of their protected characteristic. No-one will be directly or indirectly discriminated against because of a protected characteristic.
Diversity	Accepting and valuing the differences in people, and recognising that such differences enriches the WEA through a broader spectrum of skills, attributes, experience and ideas.
Inclusion	Is about everyone who is part of the WEA; all students, staff, volunteers, members, partners and other stakeholders. It involves taking action to remove barriers to participation and learning. Inclusion also involves eliminating discrimination and promoting equality.
Protected characteristic	Direct or indirect discrimination due to a person's age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race (including colour, nationality, ethnic origin and caste), religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. Separate legislation also provides similar protection against discrimination on the grounds of part time status and membership or non-membership of a trade union.
Direct discrimination	Less favourable treatment is given to an individual because of their protected characteristic.
Indirect discrimination	A policy, practice or rule is applied to everyone but may place a particular group of employees with a protected characteristic (e.g. females, older employees, disabled employees) at a disadvantage. Indirect discrimination may be lawfully justified in certain circumstances.
Disability	A physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term (twelve months or more) adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Harassment

Unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct, which has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, in particular when creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment, and which is related to a person's protected characteristic.

Please refer to the harassment policy for further information.

5. Legal duties

Under the Equality Act 2010, we have three public duties we aim to meet as we work towards our mission:

Advance equality of opportunity

This is fundamental part of the WEA's mission and values. The WEA will work to ensure that every individual reaches their full potential regardless of their personal identity and / or characteristics or socio-economic status. The WEA will make all reasonable adjustments to its provision, teaching, learning and assessment resources, access and other publications to enable equal access for all individuals and groups.

Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation

The WEA operates a zero tolerance policy to discrimination. We perceive this to be a minimum standard that all staff, students, volunteers and members, partners and visitors will achieve. The WEA will ensure that procedures for challenging all forms of bullying and discrimination, harassment and unacceptable behaviour are widely promoted.

Foster good relations

The WEA will pro-actively promote equality, diversity and inclusion. It will ensure that students, volunteers, members and staff have an understanding and appreciation for the diversity and difference that goes to make up the society in which we live and work.

6. Educational provision

With regard to its provision the Association will:

- ▶ Implement an inclusive learning approach across all WEA provision by paying particular attention to programme design and delivery to maximise the match between the needs of individual learners and the educational opportunities provided,
- ▶ Ensure good practice in teaching and learning and assessment;
- ▶ Support the development of effective student support services;

- ▶ Establish and maintain outreach educational provision in community venues and in workplace contexts in order to widen participation wherever possible;
- ▶ Develop programmes in response to expressed needs and demands in local communities from individuals and organisations;
- ▶ Ensure that this policy and the EDI plan are applied at all stages of project development and delivery for contracts delivered through ESFA, European Social Fund and any other funding body;
- ▶ Ensure that Association strategic plans and Association and regional operational plans include specific measurable targets to promote equality and diversity and inclusion.

7. Voluntary participation and governance

The WEA believes that democratic voluntary participation in its organisation and decision-making processes promotes mutuality, and builds the capacity of the organisation. The Association will therefore:

- ▶ Maintain organisational structures that place students at the heart of all decision making, particularly in the governance of the Association;
- ▶ Encourage full voluntary involvement at all levels of the Association, (Local, Regional and Association), and underpin that involvement with appropriate training and support;
- ▶ Enable students to be directly involved in the development of their programmes through branch and regional committees and councils and arrangements with external partners;
- ▶ Actively seek involvement from underrepresented groups within the membership and governance structures of the Association at all levels.

8. Employment practices

The WEA is committed to ensuring that all staff and prospective staff are treated fairly and equitably on their relevant merits and abilities and within the requirements of their employment.

The WEA aims to actively encourage a climate of respect, dignity at work and value in all aspects of employment practice.

8.1 Employment policies and procedures

In order to ensure this the WEA has a range of policies, procedures and commitments, which are reviewed on a regular basis. These include:

- ▶ Recruitment and reference policy and procedures;
- ▶ Staff code of conduct;
- ▶ Capability and disciplinary policy and procedures;
- ▶ Grievance, harassment and bullying policy and procedures;
- ▶ Performance management and annual staff review policy and procedure;
- ▶ Maternity, paternity, adoption and personal, family and domestic leave policy and procedures;
- ▶ Annual leave policy and procedures;
- ▶ Induction policy and procedure;
- ▶ Probation policy and procedure;
- ▶ Flexible working and job share policy and procedures;
- ▶ Job descriptions policy;
- ▶ Pay, grading and job evaluation procedure;
- ▶ Managing absence policy;
- ▶ Job security and redundancy policy and procedures;
- ▶ Leavers policy and procedures;
- ▶ Health and safety policy and procedures (inc stress management);
- ▶ Safeguarding policy and procedures;
- ▶ Staff development and training policy and procedure;
- ▶ Whistleblowing policy and procedures;
- ▶ Dignity At work statement.

8.2 Job design

The design of jobs, working hours and related practices can discriminate directly or indirectly against certain groups of applicants. As vacancies arise or departments are restructured, wherever possible, the requirements of individual jobs should be reviewed and re-designed where necessary, in order to ensure the broadest possible catchment of essential recruits of suitable caliber.

WEA recognises the need to consider introducing, where appropriate, flexible working patterns such as job share, part-time working and / or home working. These methods of working will be considered dependent on business needs.

Please refer to the flexible working policy and the homeworking policy for further information.

8.3 Job advertisements

All vacancies will normally be advertised within the WEA in order to provide an equal opportunity for any interested persons to apply.

Occasionally, it may not be appropriate to advertise a role. These exceptions include, but are not limited to:

- ▶ For senior roles, where there are no other candidates in the business who are suitable, to ensure speed of appointment, to enable confidentiality or to ensure that unsuitable candidates are not put through an unnecessary selection process;
- ▶ Where the role or a significant element of a role has already been undertaken for a reasonable period by an individual;
- ▶ During a redundancy situation, where a suitably qualified / experienced employee would otherwise be at risk of redundancy;
- ▶ Where there is a requirement to retain key talent in the business.

Where the reason for not advertising a role is not listed above, UNITE will be consulted before any action to fill the role is taken.

Applications will be encouraged from all suitably qualified individuals and, where appropriate, particular emphasis will be placed upon encouraging applications from those who may be currently under represented in the WEA.

All recruitment will be conducted in accordance with the recruitment policy.

8.4 Recruitment (including transfers and promotions)

It is the WEA's intention that recruiting managers will receive guidance or training on interviewing skills and equal opportunities.

Managers should review all selection criteria to ensure that they are related to the job requirement and are not discriminatory.

The WEA shall not insist upon higher education or professional qualifications other than those, which are strictly necessary for the job. In assessing qualifications, it will not be assumed that overseas diplomas or degrees are of a lower standard than their UK equivalents.

Interviews may be conducted to establish skills, experience and qualifications. Interviewers will not ask questions relating to any protected characteristic during a recruitment interview, nor reject a candidate, because of a protected characteristic (for example, sexuality, plans to have a family, age, religious beliefs etc.).

All appointments will be made solely on merit.

8.5 Training and development

The WEA is committed to providing training and development opportunities for everyone.

The criteria for selecting employees for training opportunities will be non-discriminatory and based upon:

- ▶ Your personal development needs;
- ▶ Business needs;
- ▶ Financial budgets;
- ▶ The availability of appropriate work-related courses.

On commencement of employment all staff are required to complete an approved equality and diversity e-learning package.

As part of induction, staff are made aware of WEA policies including in relation to bullying and harassment.

A personal development plan is created a part of each employee's goal setting and personal review, which is based on their individual needs.

Whenever practicable, training will be arranged so that all categories of employees may attend (e.g. part-time employees).

The content of any training programmes will support this policy and will not discriminate in any way.

It is the WEA's intention to provide equality and diversity awareness guidance to all employees.

All training needs are assessed on an annual basis as part of the annual review process. The EDI scrutiny panel may also recommend specific training needs.

8.6 Disability

If you have a disability, reasonable and practicable adjustments will be considered, to ensure you remain in employment. Examples include:

- ▶ Decreased working hours;
- ▶ Alternative start time / finish time;
- ▶ Reduced targets or objectives;
- ▶ Allocating some duties to another person;
- ▶ Making adjustments to premises;
- ▶ Transfer to an alternative vacant position;
- ▶ Transfer to a different location / place of work (e.g. homeworking);
- ▶ Time off during working hours for rehabilitation, assessment or treatment;
- ▶ Training and / or re-skilling;
- ▶ Alterations to your desk / workstation / work environment / work equipment;
- ▶ Different trigger points in the absence management scheme;
- ▶ Provision of an interpreter;
- ▶ Provision of supervision and assistance.

This list is not exhaustive.

Please also refer to the absence management policy.

8.7 Redundancy

The WEA aims to ensure that redundancy selection criteria will not directly or indirectly relate to a protected characteristic. For example:

- ▶ Age, gender, religion, race, sexuality, pregnancy, disability, marital status or union membership will not be used as a specific criterion;
- ▶ Service related criterion will be used within legal limits only;
- ▶ Where absence levels are used as a criterion, reasonable adjustments may be made for those with a disability.

If you are pregnant, on maternity, adoption, parental or paternity leave, you may have further legal rights in redundancy situations. Please refer to HR for further information.

8.8 Annual leave

Many religions (or similar beliefs) have special festival or spiritual observance days. Whilst there is no automatic legal right to time off work for such events (with the exception of public holidays), you may request annual leave in order to celebrate festivals or attend ceremonies.

The WEA will sympathetically consider such a request where it is reasonable and practicable for you to be away from work and where you have sufficient annual leave entitlement, subject to resource levels on the day. You are encouraged to book this time off as far in advance as possible to avoid disappointment.

8.9 Termination of employment

You will not be dismissed because of a protected characteristic.

If you leave the WEA, you will be given the opportunity to outline your personal experience on the application of this policy, during an exit interview.

8.10 Disciplinary, grievance, performance improvement, appeal

The WEA will ensure that the disciplinary, grievance performance improvement and appeal procedures do not, in themselves, discriminate against any employees.

Where you have a communication disability or where your first language is not English, the WEA will consider requests to be accompanied by an interpreter at a formal hearing.

In accordance with the grievance policy, if you have a concern regarding equal opportunities or the application of this Policy, you should attempt to resolve the matter informally with your manager. Alternatively, the grievance policy may be invoked. Where there is a concern regarding alleged harassment, the harassment policy should also be followed.

8.11 Agency workers

Agency workers, provided to WEA by a temporary work agency will not be unlawfully discriminated against, on the grounds of agency worker status. Agency workers are immediately entitled to equal access to any shared facilities or services provided by the WEA such as the canteen, vending machines, crèche and car park.

Following twelve weeks continuous service on the same assignment, you are also entitled to the following:

- ▶ The same pay as a permanent colleague doing the same job;
- ▶ Automatic pension scheme enrolment;
- ▶ Paid annual leave;
- ▶ Rest periods.

9. Breach of policy

Any breach of this policy may be treated as gross misconduct in accordance with the discipline policy, an outcome of which may include disciplinary action, up to and including summary dismissal.

10. Data protection

Equal opportunities monitoring forms will be provided to all new employees and throughout the course of your employment. Completion is voluntary. Your personal data contained on this form (and from other sources) will:

- ▶ Be stored confidentially on your personal file;
- ▶ Be used to gather general statistics to monitor the effectiveness of this policy;
- ▶ Not be used for any other purpose;
- ▶ Not be disclosed to a third party, without your explicit written consent.

11. Implementation and communication

This policy statement will be implemented through the actions set out in the EDI action plan and will inform the Association's strategic plan, including in relation to:

- ▶ Student induction;
- ▶ Implementation of the WEA approach to education and learning across all our provision;
- ▶ Volunteer induction and training;
- ▶ Appropriate training and support for employees;
- ▶ Partnership agreements;
- ▶ Funding proposals.

12. Monitoring and review

Monitoring and review takes place as follows:

- ▶ Monitoring of staff by equality characteristics which will be reported to senior leadership at regular intervals and form part of a data-dashboard;
- ▶ Reporting on student and participant data including by project, to support self-assessment and to inform annual business planning and self-assessment report
- ▶ Planning, managing and monitoring EDI in the WEA is overseen by the equality and diversity scrutiny panel which draws together senior management including the CEO/General secretary, Head of HR Operations and Directors of Education. The panel is responsible for the maintenance, regular review and updating of this policy, and reporting to Trustees on progress against the EDI plan. Policies relating to employment are overseen and agreed with Unite.

13. Contact information

HR may be contacted on:

Tel: 0300 303 3464

Email: HR@wea.ac.uk

Address: The Coach Works – First Floor, 21 The Calls, Leeds, LS2 7EH

14. Revision history

Version number	Date of change	Description of change
1	01/12/2009	New policy
2	01/10/2013	Unknown
3	01/01/2018	Complete re-write of policy. Significant changes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Policy is for employees only and does not relate to customers / clients of WEA; ▶ Removal of any references to any client related articles of Association and other documentation; ▶ Specific sections of each area of employment included.
4	06/04/2018	Minor amendments following discussions with UNITE
5	07/09/2018	Additions to refer specifically to European Social Fund and other funders
6	16/08/2019	Minor amendments following ESFA audit
7	13/08/2020	No amendments
8	23/06/2021	Policy re-brand and review
9	21/06/2022	Minor amends following legislation