EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

Date Approved:	24th May 2021
Approved By:	Board
Executive Lead:	Director of Projects and Performance as lead of the EDI committee
Document Owner:	Sophie Runcorn
Review due:	June 2022 (or as relevant legislation is updated)

Scope and purpose of this policy

The scope of this policy is supporting equity, diversity and inclusion within Ada's staff body. This in turn benefits Ada's learners through our culture and values and through clear signals such as representation. Appendix 1 includes a list of our policies and curriculum documents which set out how we promote equity, diversity and inclusion within our cohorts of learners.

The policy's purpose is to:

*   Support equity, fairness and respect for all in our employment, whether temporary, part-time or full-time.
*   Not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of age, disability (including mental health conditions and neurodiversity), gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. In addition to these protected characteristics we will not discriminate due to trans status or socioeconomic background.
*   Oppose and avoid all forms of discrimination. This includes in pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities.

Definitions

A number of terms are referred to in this document which have been defined for clarity:

Equity: Equity is treating people differently dependent on need to achieve a fair and just outcome. It involves removal of barriers (discrimination, bias and intolerances) so everyone has a fair opportunity to participate. It differs from equality which involves treating everyone the same (equally) regardless of need.

Diversity: The practice or quality of involving people from a range of different socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds and of different genders, sexual orientations, ages, physical and mental abilities, and religious, political or other ideological beliefs. A person cannot be diverse (everyone is unique), only groups or organisations can be diverse.

Inclusion: Inclusion refers to the behaviours and social norms that ensure people feel welcome, valued and respected.

Bias: Inclination or prejudice for or against one person or group, especially in a way considered to be unfair. Biases may be held by an individual, group, or institution and can have negative or positive consequences. There are two types of biases: conscious bias (also known as explicit bias) which operates intentionally and unconscious bias (also known as implicit bias) which operates

outside of the person's awareness and can be in direct contradiction to a person's espoused beliefs and values.

Discrimination: Discrimination occurs when individuals or groups are unfairly treated in a way which is worse than other people are treated, on the basis of their actual or perceived membership of certain groups or social categories rather than on individual merit. It involves restricting members of one group from opportunities or privileges that are available to members of another group.

Equal opportunity: The right to be treated without discrimination. Individuals are treated the same as others and given the same set of opportunities and access to facilities regardless of personal characteristics (see full list of characteristics in section below). Note equal opportunity does not always result in equal outcomes.

<u>Ada's commitments</u>

This section sets out what the College commits to doing in order to achieve the purpose (referenced above). The College commits to:

- Create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination and to take seriously complaints of this nature by staff, learners, partners, visitors, and the public in the course of Ada's activities through a transparent and robust complaints process.

- Encourage equity, diversity and inclusion in the workplace in order that all staff feel accepted for who they are, respected, and able to give their best at work. Individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.

- Provide a safe and supportive environment for staff to question or challenge opinion and embolden staff to call-out unacceptable attitudes, comments or behaviour in the moment.

- Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential.

- Decisions concerning staff being based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).

- Review recruitment and employment practices when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the relevant policies to take account of changes in the law and what we know to be right.

- Strive for a staff and governing body that is truly representative of society and our learners.

- Portray the organisation externally to partners, stakeholders and the public in a way that aligns with our EDI policy.

How we will deliver on our commitments

Ada will deliver on these commitments through the following means:

Leadership

The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy is fully supported by the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and the Board of Governors. There is a nominated ELT lead for EDI work across the college and their role is to support the EDI committee to achieve its goals.

The EDI committee is formed of staff and the ELT lead. Its remit is to embed EDI in the organisation's practices and policies, to solicit ideas from the wider Ada community and decide how best to implement them and to champion staff to think in a more equitable, diverse and inclusive way in their day to day work including with our learners where relevant. The committee's remit also includes holding the organisation and leadership team to account through tracking and reporting on agreed EDI metrics and actions as set out below.

Tracking and reporting progress

To ensure progress is made against delivering on our commitments, Ada will track and report on a variety of supporting metrics:

- The make-up of the workforce and governors regarding information such as age, sex, gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability.
- Gender and ethnic minority pay gaps.
- The views of staff on EDI matters measured through responses to specific questions in staff surveys.
- The number and type of EDI related training and development opportunities provided to staff each year.
- The number and type of discrimination reports and grievances raised.
- The number of qualifying decisions/policies that have had an equality impact assessment carried out as part of the decision-making or policy development process.
- An assessment of how the equity, diversity and inclusion policy and any supporting action plan are working in practice.

The Executive Leadership Team will receive reporting termly (three times per year) with an annual summary going to the Board and shared with staff. Depending on when the underlying data is collected, not all of these metrics will be reported on in every termly ELT report.

Training

Ada will provide mandatory training to managers and all other staff about their rights and responsibilities under the equity, diversity and inclusion policy. Responsibilities include staff supporting the work of the organisation to provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.

In addition to training staff on their legal rights and responsibilities, Ada will provide training and development opportunities for staff to explore and understand topics that promote equitable, diverse and inclusive thinking and behaviours (e.g. privilege and bias, mental health awareness, working with neurodiversity).

Reporting incidents and grievances

Staff members who feel they have faced discrimination in the workplace should raise a grievance. Ada's grievance policy can be found here in the Ada-Policies & Forms drive. Use of the organisation's grievance procedures does not affect an employee's right to make a claim to an employment tribunal within three months of the alleged discrimination.

If you are unsure whether you have faced discrimination in the workplace, or are uncomfortable raising it via a grievance then you are encouraged to report it using Ada's discrimination reporting form. This form will be reviewed by HR and you will be contacted within 10 working days to acknowledge receipt and discuss any next steps if relevant.

Reporting an incident through Ada's discrimination reporting form does not preclude the staff member from raising a grievance at a later date.

Working with external partners

The remit of this EDI policy is deliberately focussed on Ada staff but it is acknowledged that external partners also play a role in the day to day life of the College's staff and learners. To encourage external speakers, industry coaches and volunteers to uphold our EDI commitments, we will send a statement in advance and ask them to read and sign.

Policy review

The equity, diversity and inclusion policy will be reviewed annually by the EDI committee and when the law relating to this area changes.