

Equality of Opportunity Policy

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1 Introduction and scope

- 1.1 De Montfort University is committed to promoting equality of opportunity in employment. Employees and job applicants will receive equal treatment regardless of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, sex or sexual orientation (for example gay, lesbian, bisexual or heterosexual), marital or civil partnership status, religion or belief (or no religion or belief), gender identity or status (transgender), age, disability, or any other protected characteristic.
- 1.2 This policy sets out the university's approach to equality of opportunity and the avoidance of discrimination at work. It applies to all aspects of employment with us, including recruitment, pay and conditions, training, appraisals, promotion, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and termination of employment. It should be applied alongside and with reference to the university's other policies and procedures including those referred to in this policy.
- 1.3 Where applicable, this policy covers all staff working for or on behalf of De Montfort University e.g. all DMU employees, secondees, consultants, contractors, volunteers, interns, casual workers and agency workers.
- 1.4 Breaches of this policy may be dealt with in accordance with the disciplinary procedure. Serious cases of deliberate discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal.
- 1.5 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and the university may amend it at any time.

2 Responsibility for the policy

- 2.1 The university's Executive Board has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy but has delegated day-to-day responsibility for overseeing its implementation to PVC/Deans, directors and managers.
- 2.2 The Equality and Diversity Steering Group (EDSG) is responsible for supporting the development of this policy and its implementation, review and publication. It will make recommendations on good practice as required in accordance with its terms of reference.
- 2.3 HR will ensure that staff policies, procedures and processes support the effective implementation of this policy. All policies and procedures referred to in this policy are available on the intranet.
- 2.4 All managers must set an appropriate standard of behaviour, lead by example and ensure that those they manage adhere to the policy and promote our aims and objectives with regard to equality of opportunity.
- 2.5 Managers will ensure that self-employed contractors, agency workers or any other individuals working temporarily in the university are made aware of the policy.
- 2.6 All staff are responsible for ensuring they act in accordance with this and other related university policies at all times.

3 **Recruitment and selection**

- 3.1 The university is committed to open and diverse recruitment with equality and diversity at the heart of all recruitment and selection processes and decisions. Recruitment, promotion, and other selection exercises such as redundancy selection and redeployment will be conducted on the basis of merit, against objective criteria that avoid discrimination.
- 3.2 The university will strive to source candidates from a wide pool in order to find the best person for the job, to achieve a diverse workforce, to ensure talent is not blocked from entering the university, and to support people from all backgrounds and cultures to realise their full potential.
- 3.3 All university recruiters need to be aware of the principles of equality and diversity and understand how unfair bias and/or unlawful discrimination can occur both directly and indirectly in the recruitment process.
- 3.4 Shortlisting, interviewing and selection will always be carried out without regard to age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin or religion or belief.
- 3.5 Recruitment processes and systems will be regularly reviewed to ensure there is no hidden bias.
- 3.6 “Positive Action” programmes may be explored where there is evidence of under-representation in certain jobs or at certain levels.
- 3.7 Every person who has been offered employment with DMU will need to be checked to ensure they are eligible to work in the UK before they are allowed to start work. These checks should be carried out for all employees who have been given a conditional offer of employment to ensure individuals are not being unlawfully discriminated against because of their nationality at any stage of the recruitment and selection process.
- 3.8 The university will consider ex-offenders for employment on their individual merits and will not automatically refuse to employ an individual because they have a criminal record.
- 3.9 The university welcomes applications from disabled people and has been awarded the Jobcentre Plus Disability Two Ticks Symbol. Reasonable adjustments to the recruitment process will be made to ensure that no applicant is disadvantaged because of their disability.

See the following related policies:

- **Recruitment and Selection Policy**
- **Redeployment Procedure**
- **Immigration and preventing illegal working**
- **Agency Worker Regulations – Guidance for Managers**
- **Religion or Belief Policy Statements and Guidance for Staff and Students**

4 **Training and development**

- 4.1 DMU is committed to providing a learning environment for all staff which enables them to fully contribute to achieving DMU’s vision for success.

- 4.2 The university will provide employees with appropriate training, developmental and educational opportunities that will enable them to acquire the skills and competencies that are needed by the university and for their own development. The principles of equality of opportunity underpin the university's commitment to life-long learning.
- 4.3 All DMU employees are required to complete equality and diversity training.

See the following related policies:

- **Staff Development Policy and Guidelines**
- **MyAppraisal**

5 Conduct

- 5.1 The university aims to provide a supportive environment where respect is shown to all, and where all staff and students are encouraged to perform to their potential. The university prohibits unlawful direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation of others and provides definitions and clear examples of the type of conduct that will not be tolerated.
- 5.2 The university will ensure that disciplinary procedures and penalties are applied without discrimination, whether they result in disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other disciplinary action.

See the following related policies:

- **Code of conduct for DMU staff**: in particular the following sections: *“Dignity at work”*; *“Dress and appearance”*; and *“Work-related social events and activities”*.
- **Dignity At Work Policy**.

6 Pay and conditions of service

The university's conditions of service, benefits and facilities are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are available to all who should have access to them and that there are no unlawful obstacles to accessing them.

7 Part-time and fixed term work

Part-time and fixed-term staff should be treated the same as comparable full-time or permanent staff and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro-rata basis where appropriate), unless different treatment is justified.

8 Flexible working and work life balance

- 8.1 The university is committed to developing work practices and policies that support work-life balance and offers progressive and flexible family-friendly policies to working parents or those with other care responsibilities, irrespective of their sex or sexual orientation.
- 8.2 Guidance is available to ensure managers are making decisions on flexible working requests fairly and to avoid discrimination.

See the following related policies:

- **Flexible Working Policy**
- **Parental Leave Policy**
- **Shared Parental Leave Policy**
- **Maternity, Adoption and Paternity Leave Policy**
- **Special Leave Policy**

9 Time off work

- 9.1 The university is supportive of employees who wish to take time off work for the purpose of religious observance. Subject to reasonable notice being given of leave dates requested, employees will normally be able to use their annual leave entitlement for this purpose.
- 9.2 Employees who are members of a university Involvement Group; such as the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Staff Group (LGBT); Black and Minority Ethnic Staff Group or Disabled Staff Group, will be granted time off with pay in order to attend university approved meetings of these groups that fall within their normal working hours.
- 9.3 All employees are entitled to take a reasonable amount of time off during their normal hours of work for family emergencies.

See the following related policies:

- **Special Leave Policy**
- **Religion or Belief: Policy Statements and Guidance for Staff and Students**

10 Termination of employment

- 10.1 The university will ensure that redundancy criteria and procedures are fair and objective and are not directly or indirectly discriminatory. Consideration must be given to the equality and diversity impact of any restructuring proposals.
- 10.2 The university recognises the contributions of a diverse workforce, including the skills and experience of older employees. It believes that employees should, wherever possible, be permitted to continue working for as long as they wish to do so. The university does not operate a compulsory retirement age for its employees.

See the following related policies:

- **Managing Change, Restructuring and Redundancy**
- **Retirement Policy**

11 Disability

- 11.1 The university encourages staff to disclose if they have a disability so that they can be appropriately supported at work.
- 11.2 If staff experience difficulties at work because of their disability, they may wish to contact their line manager or HR to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty.

- 11.3 The university will monitor the physical features of its premises to consider whether they might place anyone with a disability at a substantial disadvantage. Where necessary, the university will take reasonable steps to improve access.
- 11.4 Employees who have a disability will be entitled to paid time off for medical appointments related to their disability. Appointments should be approved with line managers and time off does not need to be made up in respect of appointments of this nature.

See the following related policies:

- **Special Leave Policy**
- **Disability-related absence: guidance**

12 **Workforce monitoring**

Workforce composition will be regularly monitored to ensure equality of opportunity at all levels of the university. Where appropriate, steps will be taken to identify and remove unjustified barriers and to meet the needs of disadvantaged or underrepresented groups.