

## Equal Opportunity Policy. V3

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### **Purpose**

BITE is committed to promote equal opportunities and diversity and encourages fairness and justice throughout the organisation. The equal opportunity policy aims to cover all the aspects of employment and academic life, recruitment, pay, terms and conditions of service, promotions, grievance and disciplinary procedures, curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, and admissions practices.

### **General Policy**

The Council takes the overall responsibility to provide equality of opportunity with respect to the following:

Age

Disability

Gender reassignment

Marriage and civil partnership

Pregnancy and maternity;

Race (*Colour, nationality, or ethnic or nationality*)

Religion or belief

Sex

Sexual orientation

socio-economic status

The Institute ensures that the vision and the mission of the Institute do not contravene the equal opportunity policy.

## **LEGISLATION AND REGULATION**

This policy takes account of the following relevant legislation:

- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Human Rights Act 1998

## **Commitment**

BITE seeks to create a fair, inclusive culture where everyone feels valued and respected, in which unfair treatment, discrimination, harassment and bullying, where they exist, are eliminated. It seeks to promote an ethos of inquiry in teaching, learning, research and links with business that encourages differences to be shared, explored and celebrated. It will respond appropriately to any attempts to challenge this ethos or to undermine good relations between different groups on campus and in the wider community.

Through its educational, employment and community activities, BITE will seek to address disadvantage and under-representation, where they exist, contributing to the achievement of a cohesive society. It seeks to promote good relations between all members of BITE and the local community, business and academic partners and other stakeholders.

BITE considers that this commitment to equality and diversity will assist it in achieving its strategic goals by enabling students and staff to realise their potential.

### **Position statement**

BITE has had a formal commitment to equal opportunities for many years. BITE's community now includes people from many cultural, faith and linguistic backgrounds and its student body has become increasingly diverse, as BITE continues to recruit students of all ethnic groups from across the UK, Europe and elsewhere overseas. It anticipates the needs of disabled people and has enhanced the services and support arrangements provided for them to ensure equality of opportunity and inclusion of people with disabilities.

The staffing establishment is less diverse than the student body. There are still gender differences in the employment patterns of academic staff in discipline areas and of professional staff by occupation. BITE is committed to addressing this and the under-representation of women, minority ethnic and disabled people at senior grades.

### **Principles**

BITE will:

- i) ensure that all policies, strategies, procedures and practices reflect its commitment to equality;
- ii) take a pro-active, best practice approach to implementing legislation;

- iii) promote an ethos of fairness, courtesy and respect that is inclusive of all members of the Institute, clients, visitors, contractors and partners;
- iv) create an environment which is safe, accessible and welcoming;
- v) ensure that all applicants( whether for study or employment opportunities) and all students and staff are treated fairly regardless of their race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, gender identity, marital/civil partnership status, family responsibilities, disability, age, sexuality, political, religious or other beliefs, socio-economic group, trade union activity or being an ex-offender;
- vi) ensure that its strategies for education, employment and community activities seek to address patterns of disadvantage and under-representation;
- vii) expect committees and other working groups to have due regard in their membership and conduct for the diversity of the BITE community and the equality impact of their decisions and recommendations;
- viii) expect managers to identify, through strategic and operational planning, achievable equality objectives for which they are accountable;
- ix) offer, staff and students opportunities to develop knowledge, skills and approaches to meet their personal and professional responsibilities;
- x) in partnership with others work constructively to ensure the effective implementation of this policy;
- xi) monitor and report annually on progress in implementing this policy.

### **Equality and diversity policy in relation to employment**

BITE understands the importance of representation from all groups in society at all levels of employment. The Institute is committed to:

- i) fair recruitment policy at each stage of the recruitment process;
- ii) fair policy throughout an individual's period of employment;
- iii) ensure that all visiting parties or individuals who are not full time employees of BITE adhere to the Institute's equality of opportunity policy;
- iv) all opportunities for career development and promotion are disseminated in a way that ensures it is brought to every one's attention;
- v) all decisions of promotion and career development are based on individual's merit and ability towards the accomplishment of the intended purpose for which the employee is considered for promotion.

### **Recruitment and selection**

All staff with responsibility for recruitment and selection are required to:

- i) use and comply with BITE's current Recruitment and Selection processes and procedures;
- ii) choose media and methods of advertising that communicate BITE's commitment to equality and diversity and employ appropriate strategies to attract suitable applicants from groups which are currently under-represented;
- iii) advertise vacancies internally and externally, unless there are exceptional circumstances, for example where current employees are at risk of redundancy in which case applications for a post may be restricted to internal candidates;

- iv) ensure that all stages of recruitment and selection are accessible to disabled people, and that any reasonable adjustments are made where requested by disabled applicants;
- v) ensure that job descriptions and person specifications are accurate and include only those requirements that are objectively necessary and justifiable;
- vi) use selection criteria and selection methods to assess all applicants fairly,
- vii) transparently and objectively against the requirements of the post concerned;
- viii) work to ensure that those involved in selection include men and women and are representative of the ethnic diversity of the BITE community and of disabled people;
- ix) ensure fairness in the terms and conditions on which appointments are made;
- x) ensure that all information on applicants for employment is treated in the strictest confidence and that such information is stored in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act (1998).

### **Employment, progression and retention**

All staff members have equal rights to training, promotion and other aspects of career development. Merit, ability and requirements of the job will be the only justification in promoting or training a staff member. The Institute aims to identify patterns of employment and career development that enable all staff to work effectively and achieve their potential. The Institute will promote flexible working arrangements, facilities and benefits to attract and retain staff by supporting them in meeting their work and personal commitments. The Institute will undertake

regular staff audits, monitoring employment and progression and identifying employment goals that need to be integrated into strategic planning.

### **Staff development**

BITE is committed to staff development as a means of achieving its objectives and enabling staff to succeed in their career and work goals. The Institute will ensure that all staff have fair access to appropriate opportunities for development. The Institute will make reasonable adjustments for disabled staff in order to achieve its equality objective.

### **Equality and diversity policy in relation to education**

- i) The Institute is committed to ensuring that all students enjoy equality of opportunity during their studies at BITE and are free from any form of discriminatory practices by the Institute or its members
- ii) Throughout the process of admissions the information of the applicant relating to age, colour, ethnic origin, family responsibility, gender, marital status, maternity and pregnancy, nationality and race, religion, belief, sexual orientation, disability and socio-economic status, will neither form part of the assessment of eligibility nor will influence the selection of the applicant.
- iii) The Institute is committed to promote and facilitate higher education to students with a diverse background.
- iv) Teaching, learning and research are free from all forms of discrimination and continually provide equality of opportunity
- v) All staff and students are continuously made aware of the Equal Opportunities Statement through the Institute's publicity material

- vi) Language support will be provided, as required, for students for whom English is not their first language or if they face difficulty in writing essays and assignments in academic style.
- vii) Module leaders will ensure that the curriculum, pedagogy and treatment of students are consistent with the Institute's general Equality and Diversity Policy.
- viii) Visiting teaching staff and other visitors who come in contact with the students of BITE on a regular basis are made aware of the Equality of Opportunity Policy.

## **Admissions, Teaching, Learning and Assessment**

### **Admissions**

BITE is committed to the policy of equal opportunity in order to prevent any discriminatory practices against a student already studying in the Institute or prospective students intending to apply for admission. The key selection criterion is the applicant's potential to complete the programme to which he or she seeks admission, to benefit from the educational experience and to achieve the standard required for the award concerned. BITE recognises a wide range of indicators of academic potential including academic and vocational qualifications, experiential learning and access qualifications.

BITE welcomes applications from disabled people and will ensure that all stages of admission anticipate the requirements of disabled people, and that any reasonable adjustments to admissions procedures requested by disabled applicants are made.

The Institute makes sure that the courses and services offered at BITE are disseminated in ways which ensure that it is brought to the attention of all the

sectors of society. The policy applies to all home students, EEA students and non-EEA students.

### **Students with criminal convictions**

The Institute ensures that anyone who has disclosed a criminal conviction is treated fairly in compliance to the Criminal Records Bureau's Code of Practice.

Any applicant for a place of study or any candidate applying for employment with BITE will be required to reveal any criminal conviction. However, a criminal record will not necessarily bar an applicant from studying or working with the Institute.

The application for the admission of applicants with criminal convictions will be scrutinized by a panel nominated by the head of the admissions department to ensure that the security, safety and the reputation of the Institute is not jeopardized should the applicant be offered a place of study on the basis of his/her merit.

A criminal conviction disclosed by any person to BITE will be treated as highly confidential and will be protected as per Data Protection Act 1998.

### **Students with disabilities**

The Institute is committed to provide support for students with disabilities and believes that these students should have access to the full range of academic, cultural and social activities the Institute offers. Therefore, BITE will take all reasonable steps to meet both the general need for access and the specific needs of individuals with additional support needs.

Disabled students, as all other students, are accepted by the Institute on the basis of academic attainment and potential to benefit from the programme to which they have applied.

Applicants who have additional support needs or learning difficulties are advised to make these known to the Institute as soon as possible, so that any special arrangements can be planned in advance

### **Teaching, learning and assessment**

In teaching, learning and assessment BITE recognises the diversity of the student body and learners' educational needs and seeks to promote equality and inclusivity in learning, teaching and assessment through attention to:

- a) programme content, resources and perspectives,
- b) pedagogy and approaches to teaching and learning,
- c) the development of a managed learning environment,
- d) assessment methods and criteria,
- e) the professional development of teaching staff.

The Institute ensures that the members of staff who are involved in delivering lectures and other academic activities are made aware of the student's disability. They are required to make necessary arrangements to meet disabled students' requirements. Members of staff are required to upload lecture slides and lecture notes in advance on the e-learning platform NETED and wherever necessary in other accessible formats.

The Institute is committed to narrowing down the digital divide between disabled and non-disabled students by developing its ICT facilities to suit students with disabilities. On request IT Services are able to support students with a disability or specific learning need.

All services and facilities, whether available to the public or to members of BITE, will reflect BITE's commitment to fair access and equal treatment. All users will be treated with courtesy and respect.

## **9 Roles, Responsibilities and Accountabilities**

All members of BITE are expected to comply with this Equality and Diversity Policy.

The Principal has responsibility for ensuring the development and implementation of the Action Plan which underpins the Equality and Diversity Policy, that staff are trained in and are aware of their legal responsibilities and that any failure to comply with the policy is dealt with appropriately.

Deans and associate deans are responsible for identifying achievable equality goals for which they are accountable and managing staff fairly and objectively in accordance with BITE's employment policies and procedures.

All members of staff have a personal responsibility to promote equality through their work, ensure that they do not act in a discriminatory manner and participate in appropriate development to meet their personal and professional responsibilities.

Students are required to behave in ways that are consistent with the Equality and Diversity Policy.

### **Compliance with this policy**

The Institute will deal with any complaints relating to this policy through the relevant complaints/grievance procedures. Disciplinary action may be taken where there is reason to believe that staff or students have failed to comply with the requirements of this policy

### **Dissemination of the policy**

Staff and students are made aware of the policy at the time of recruitment and enrolment respectively. The policy statement is made available to the general public through the Institute's website.

The Institute makes sure that the courses and services offered at BITE are disseminated in ways which ensure that they are brought to the attention of all sectors of society.

The equal opportunity statement is included in staff handbook. All staff is made aware of the policy at the time of induction.

### **Review**

The policy will be reviewed on a yearly basis.

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