



Equal Opportunities & Diversity Policy

Introduction

This policy supersedes any earlier policy statements and sets out the company's commitment to Equal Opportunities and Diversity. It has evolved in line with legislation and puts into effect within our organisation the provisions of various Acts of Parliament including the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (as amended by the Sex Discrimination Act 1986), the Race Relations Act 1976, Disability Act 1995 and Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006. It also places emphasis on the importance of valuing diversity within the organisational culture. If you make a booking for Derwent accommodation through your university, the university's booking or allocations policy will apply, and it will take precedence over this policy.

The policy will be subject to regular formal review; however, the policy remains very much a working document and will evolve continually to ensure it meets legislative requirements.

Valuing Diversity

Valuing and managing diversity effectively embraces equal opportunities in its widest sense and goes far beyond simple compliance with legislation. It involves developing an organisational culture and working practices that welcome and respect the differences between individuals, both visible (e.g., ethnicity, gender etc) and non-visible (e.g. age, nationality, background, sexuality, education, experience etc.), but utilises these differences to the benefit of the individual and the organisation as a whole. Essentially, it is good business practice.

Derwent Students recognises the benefits that valuing diversity can bring and is committed to creating and developing an inclusive environment in which people of different backgrounds with different experiences and different views all feel valued for the positive contribution that they can make to the organisation.

Rights

Derwent Students is committed to ensuring that everyone is treated equally and valued and that the organisation operates fair and non-discriminatory recruitment, employment and service practices. Every member or prospective member of the company has the right to quality of opportunity and the right to be respected for their diversity.

In practice this means that all have:

- The right to be treated fairly regardless of sex, colour, religious beliefs, ethnic or national origin, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, age, working pattern (e.g. part time work) or any other grounds unrelated to their ability to perform their jobs.
- The right to be treated with dignity at all times.
- The right to be considered on merit for vacancies, development opportunities and promotion.
- The right to reasonable adjustment to overcome problems at work which are associated with disability.
- The right to be valued and respected for their individual differences and viewpoints that they bring to the company.

Responsibilities

Everyone within the company has a responsibility to ensure that the working environment is free of discrimination, harassment and bullying.

Individual Responsibilities

Each member of staff must ensure that through their individual or collective actions they do not discriminate, harass, bully or discriminate against others. Failure to comply with this requirement could result in disciplinary action being taken.

Management Responsibilities

Anyone with managerial responsibilities is expected to deal with staff in a fair and consistent manner, applying the same standards to all. Managers must not engage in any activity or behave in a manner that is, or could be perceived as, discriminatory and should ensure that all employees are treated purely on their skills, qualities and ability to do the job.

Managers must not deny staff access to opportunity or allow individuals to be directed into specific areas of work through preconceptions about the specific individuals or groups or assumptions about the reaction of others within the organisation. It is the responsibility of managers to promote equality of opportunities among their staff and to take steps to prevent discrimination from occurring.

Managers are also responsible for stopping discrimination, bullying or harassment immediately it is identified and for making staff aware that such practice will not be tolerated and could result in disciplinary action.

Managers must also treat all complaints sensitively, seriously, in complete confidence and in accordance with the company's Grievance Procedure. As individuals who have suffered discrimination, bullying or harassment may be unwilling to raise the issue, managers should be alert to this possibility and have a role in identification of such cases. In addition, managers must ensure that neither they nor their staff express opinions that could be considered offensive and that potentially offensive materials are neither displayed or circulated.