



GTC Scotland Equality and Diversity Policy

Equality and Diversity Policy Statement

GTC Scotland promotes equality and diversity because we respect and value difference. We want everything that we do to be fair to all individuals and groups.

While all teachers registered with us must meet the required professional standards of conduct and competence, we want to promote an inclusive profession that incorporates people from a range of diverse backgrounds and that respects the principle of equal treatment. We understand that varied perspectives will make valuable contributions to the teaching profession and that this will benefit learners.

We want to ensure that all of our policies and services are free from discrimination.

We seek to promote equality of opportunity by recognising and developing the diversity of talent within staff and members of Council under an ethos of mutual respect and trust.

Public Sector Equality Duty

GTC Scotland is subject to the 'general duty' set out in the Equality Act 2010 when carrying out its functions which means we must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment, foster good relations and advance equality of opportunity. This duty covers all of the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act.

Purpose of Policy

- To communicate GTC Scotland's commitment to the promotion of equality and diversity.
- To ensure that all those involved in carrying out GTC Scotland's functions (including employees, Council members and appointees) are aware of their rights and responsibilities with regard to equality and diversity.

Commitment to Equality and Diversity and Responsibility for Implementing this Policy

GTC Scotland believes that excellence will be achieved through recognising the value of every individual. We acknowledge the following basic rights for all those currently, or prospectively, involved in carrying out GTC Scotland's functions:

- to be treated with dignity and respect;
- to be treated fairly with regard to all procedures, assessments and choices;
- to receive encouragement to achieve their full potential.

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for ensuring the implementation of this policy.

All those currently, or prospectively, involved in carrying out GTC Scotland's functions have a responsibility for ensuring that this policy is implemented and is not undermined in any way. The following must be avoided:

- discrimination/...

- discrimination against or harassment of colleagues, job applicants or others;
- instructing, pressurising or trying to influence others to discriminate or harass;
- the victimisation of anyone who has made a complaint alleging that discrimination or harassment may have taken place.

Acts of discrimination or harassment by employees in the course of their employment will be investigated and, if found proven, will lead to disciplinary action. Acts of discrimination or harassment by Council members or appointees will lead to further action being taken in accordance with the terms of the GTC Scotland Code of Conduct and Membership Scheme. Individuals should report matters appropriately if they suspect that discrimination or harassment has taken place.

Harassment of employees by third parties will be treated very seriously. Should such harassment take place, action will be taken to prevent it from happening again.

Recruitment and Selection Processes

GTC Scotland's long-term aim is to work towards ensuring that the composition of our workforce and all those involved with our Council reflect the diversity of the community around us.

Policies and procedures related to the recruitment and selection of all those involved in carrying out GTC Scotland's functions will be monitored regularly to ensure that they comply with this policy, current legislation and any Codes of Practice or other relevant best practice guidance.

Selection to all posts will be based solely on merit. Those with responsibility for recruitment and selection processes must ensure that they do not discriminate directly or indirectly with regard to the following:

- drafting job specifications and application forms;
- advertising internally and externally;
- shortlisting;
- selection interviews/tests;
- checking of references.

All recruitment adverts should contain the wording 'GTC Scotland positively welcomes applications from all sections of the community'.

Reasons for selection and rejection of candidates will be recorded and retained in accordance with GTC Scotland's Retention of Records Policy so that they may be available for audit purposes.

Employee Development, Promotion and Conditions of Service

The policies and procedures relating to staff development, promotion, conditions of service and discipline and dismissal will be monitored regularly to ensure that they comply with this policy, current legislation and Codes of Practice or other relevant best practice guidance.

Wherever possible, efforts will be made to identify and remove unnecessary/unjustifiable barriers and provide appropriate facilities and conditions of service to meet the special needs of disadvantaged and/or under-represented groups.

Reasonable/...

Reasonable Adjustments

GTC Scotland welcomes people with disabilities. We will do our best to make any necessary adjustments to arrangements and/or our facilities to enable those carrying out GTC Scotland's functions who have a disability to perform their roles to the best of their ability.

During recruitment processes, we will make every effort to adjust the application and selection process to meet the needs of candidates with disabilities. Disabled candidates will be given the opportunity at an early stage in the procedure to discuss any particular requirements that they might have in view of their disability.

We will also do our best to make reasonable adjustments to arrangements for GTC Scotland meetings, events and hearings where we are made aware that a disabled individual has particular needs or requirements.

Religion and Belief

GTC Scotland will:

- seek to ensure that cultural and religious festivals, holidays and rights of worship are acknowledged and recognised;
- where reasonably practicable, seek to ensure that meetings, events and hearings are not scheduled on cultural or religious festivals so as to prevent people from attending;
- ensure leave is not unreasonably withheld from employees who may wish to celebrate cultural and religious festivals; and
- not impose dress restrictions on employees or any person carrying out GTC Scotland's functions which may be discriminatory and cannot be objectively justified.

Service Delivery

All of GTC Scotland's stakeholders, both internal and external, are eligible to receive the same quality and level of service regardless of their individual differences. GTC Scotland will ensure that those involved in service delivery are trained to provide an appropriate and informed response to all customers and stakeholders.

We will provide information about our services which is accessible to all. In consultation with stakeholders, we will endeavour to deliver services in ways which are appropriate to the needs of different groups, removing where possible any barriers which may deny access.

Procurement

When procuring goods or services, we will require suppliers to comply with this policy. As part of our tendering procedure we will obtain evidence from potential suppliers that they have, where appropriate, policies in place to ensure the services that they provide meet equality and diversity principles.

Equality Impact Assessments

All new policies and projects will be screened to assess their relevance to equality and diversity. If they are found to be relevant, an equality impact assessment will be carried out. This is a systematic method of consulting on and assessing the effects a proposed policy or project will have on different groups of people. Some policies and projects will be more relevant than others and the time and resources spent on the process should be proportionate.

Monitoring/...

Monitoring

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored by gathering and analysing information on the protected characteristics using equality monitoring forms (or other appropriate means). Information gathered will be used to identify areas where there may be inequalities and to seek to ensure that no discrimination is taking place. It will be treated in strictest confidence and only used for the purposes stated.

Complaints and Further Information

Anyone involved in carrying out GTC Scotland's functions (including employees, Council members and appointees) who feels that they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation should not be afraid to raise the matter. They should speak to whomever they feel most comfortable discussing the situation with, whether this is their manager, the HR Officer, a Council/Panel/Committee Convener or any member of the management team. Any such complaints will be dealt with in a timely and sensitive manner in accordance with any other relevant and applicable policies.

Any external stakeholders who believe they have been discriminated against by GTC Scotland or that we have not fulfilled our commitment to equality and diversity should complain using our complaints process (<http://www.gtcs.org.uk/about-gtcs/feedback-home.aspx>).

Definitions

Protected characteristics are the grounds upon which discrimination is unlawful. The characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Equality is about protecting people from being discriminated against on the grounds of a protected characteristic.

Diversity is about valuing and reaping the benefits of a varied workforce that makes the best of people's talents whatever their background. Diversity involves respecting individual differences, which can be visible or non-visible.

Direct discrimination is less favourable treatment of a person compared to another person because of a protected characteristic.

Indirect discrimination is when an unjustified provision, criterion or practice is applied which puts people with a protected characteristic at a disadvantage compared with others who do not share that/those characteristic(s).

Discrimination by association is when someone does not have a protected characteristic but is discriminated against because of their association with someone who does.

Discrimination arising from disability is when a person is treated unfavourably because of something arising in consequence of their disability.

Duty to make reasonable adjustments means that where a disabled person is at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with people who are not disabled, there is a duty to take reasonable steps to remove that disadvantage by (i) changing provisions, criteria or practices; (ii) altering, removing or providing a reasonable alternative to physical features; or (iii) providing auxiliary aids.

Victimisation means punishing or treating someone unfairly because they have made a complaint of discrimination or because they have supported someone else who had made a complaint of discrimination.

Harassment is unwanted behaviour that violates a person's dignity or creates a degrading, humiliating, hostile, intimidating or offensive environment.