

Equality and Diversity Policy

Introduction

1. FDQ fully supports the principles of equal opportunity and diversity and is committed to promoting these principles in all its activities and in its published materials. In partnership with its centres FDQ will ensure that all its learners/apprentices have equal and open access to FDQ assessment and products.
2. This policy universally covers equality and diversity in:
 - a) The development of assessment products and services, e.g. units, qualifications, end-point assessments, learning materials, internal/external quality assurance, development workshops.
 - b) The fair treatment, assessment and achievement of learners/apprentices in the provision of FDQ assessment products.
3. In its universal policy approach, FDQ will ensure that all current legislation is accounted for and that the principles of equality of opportunity and diversity are upheld regardless of learners'/apprentices'
 - religion or beliefs
 - gender
 - age
 - race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin)
 - marital/civil partnership status
 - sexual orientation
 - gender reassignment
 - disability
 - being pregnant or on maternity leave
3. For the purposes of this policy and in accordance with the General Conditions of Recognition reasonable adjustments are adjustments made to an assessment for a qualification so as to enable a disabled learner to demonstrate his or her knowledge, skills

and understanding to the level of attainment required by the specification for that qualification.

Principles of equality and diversity

4. FDQ will ensure that the principles of equality of opportunity and diversity are embedded in all its assessment products and services by:
 - a) Good practice in the recruitment and training of those working for/on behalf of FDQ, e.g. training of unit developers/unit credit & levellers/assessment material developers/Independent Examiners/examiners/External Quality Assurance Consultants
 - b) Careful editing of the format, content and presentation of all FDQ products and services, e.g. policies and procedures, units of assessment, learning and assessment materials, workshops, reports and promotional material
 - c) External monitoring of practices, procedures and data relating to the provision of qualifications and related assessment materials by centres. The monitoring will include identification of any feature which could disadvantage a group of learners/apprentices who share a particular characteristic. If such a feature is identified, FDQ will remove any disadvantage which is unjustifiable. FDQ will also maintain a record of any disadvantage which it believes to be justifiable, setting out the reasons why in its opinion the disadvantage is justifiable.
 - d) Appropriate preparation, production and distribution of all material by FDQ
 - e) The relaxation of any conventions which serve to inhibit the performance of those learners/apprentices with reasonable adjustment requirements in relation to learners/apprentices not so disadvantaged, provided that such action does not have a deleterious effect on the standard, quality and integrity of assessment
 - f) Justifying the inclusion of potential barriers to equality of opportunity and diversity in products and services where these are necessary and seeking to minimise their impact.

- g) FDQ will consider any reasonable requests to retrospectively change or amend registration and certification details. Requests will be dealt with sensitively and with due regard for the circumstances of the application and any applicable legislation.
- 5. FDQ is committed to working co-operatively with all appropriate national and local organisations/agencies to develop means of identifying and preventing inequality of opportunity, in the provision of FDQ assessment products and related services.

Data collection and analysis

- 6. Equality and diversity information/data is recorded by FDQ centres, and additionally FDQ collects similar information/data at point of registration of learners/apprentices for all FDQ assessment products. This information/data is used to inform internal self-assessment for compliance and is reported to the Governance Committee. The Responsible Officer is the registered data controller for qualifications.

Dealing with equality and diversity issues

- 7. If the data regularly collected, requests for reasonable adjustments, complaints, enquiries, appeals or any other centre, learner or stakeholder feedback suggests that FDQ's principles of equality and diversity are not being adhered to, or that the desired outcome is not being achieved, FDQ will undertake a review of unit(s), qualification(s), assessment policy, procedure or activity that appears to be causing a problem. Should this review highlight an issue, it will be resolved by, for example, re-writing a unit or qualification, producing a new assessment, amending policies or procedures or providing further training to staff and/or consultants.
- 8. If a centre is found not to have implemented its own equality and diversity policy or if equality issues arise at centres, the matter will be discussed during quality assurance visits and rectified via agreed actions. If necessary, FDQ will enforce the stages of its Sanctions Policy.
- 9. Should the issue cause or have the potential to cause an adverse effect, FDQ will report the matter to Regulators as stipulated in the 'Dealing with Adverse Effects Policy'.