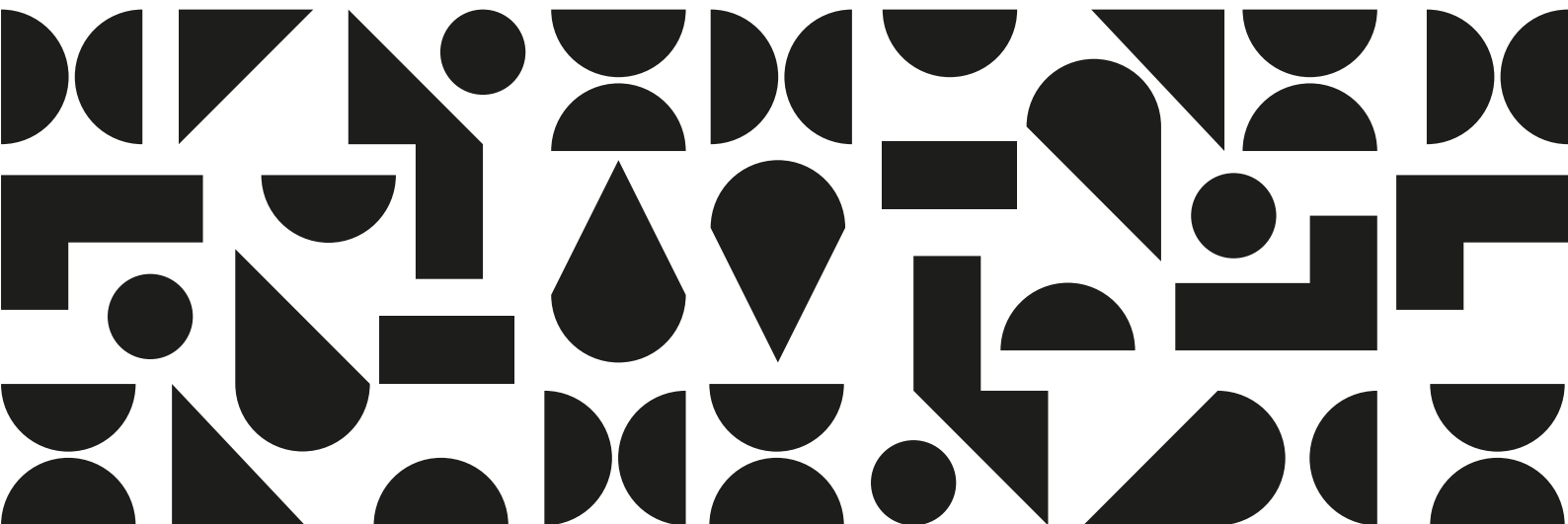
ctavius

Learning and Development Partnership

Equality and Diversity Policy



Purpose

This policy sets out Octavius learning and Development Partnership's (Octavius) approach to equality and diversity. OCTAVIUS is committed to promoting equality and diversity and promoting a culture that actively values difference and recognises that people from different backgrounds and experiences can bring valuable insights to the workplace and enhance the way we work. OCTAVIUS aims to be an inclusive organisation, committed to providing equal opportunities including in the training and development of members and volunteers, and to pro-actively tackling and eliminating discrimination against women and girls in careers in the built environment.

Equality and diversity at OCTAVIUS

We consider that equality means breaking down barriers, eliminating discrimination and ensuring equal opportunities and access for all groups. We consider diversity to mean celebrating difference and valuing everyone. Each person is an individual with visible and non-visible differences and by respecting this everyone can feel valued for their contributions which is beneficial not only for the individual but for OCTAVIUS too. We acknowledge that equality and diversity are not inter-changeable but inter-dependent. There can be no equality of opportunity if difference is not valued and harnessed.

Scope

The rights and obligations set out in this policy apply equally to all Directors, committee members, volunteers, agencies and contractors and others employed under a contract of service. Each personal representing OCTAVIUS have a responsibility for the application of this policy. As part of the induction, you are expected to read and familiarise yourself with this policy, ensure that this policy is properly observed and fully complied with and to agree to the declaration.

OCTAVIUS's commitment

Everyone is entitled to an environment that promotes dignity, equality and respect for all. OCTAVIUS will not tolerate any acts of unlawful or unfair discrimination (including harassment) because of a protected characteristic:

- Sex;
- Gender reassignment;
- Marriage and civil partnership;
- Pregnancy and maternity;
- Race (including ethnic origin, colour, nationality and national origin);
- Disability;
- Sexual orientation;
- Religion and or belief; and
- Age.

Discrimination on the basis of work pattern (part-time working, fixed term contract, flexible working) which is unjustifiable will also not be tolerated. All members will be encouraged to develop their skills and fulfil their potential and to take advantage of training, development and progression opportunities in OCTAVIUS.

Selection for membership, training, or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated. If you believe that you may have suffered discrimination because of any of the above protected characteristics, you should consider the appropriateness and feasibility of attempted informal resolution by discussion in the first instance with a Director. You may decide in the alternative to raise the matter through OCTAVIUS's Harassment Policy or Grievance Policy. For types of discrimination see the Annex to this policy. Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the appropriate procedure. OCTAVIUS will ensure that individuals who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably by OCTAVIUS as a result. However, false allegations of a breach of this policy which are found to have been made in bad faith will be dealt with under OCTAVIUS's Discipline Policy. A person found to have breached this policy may be subject to disciplinary action under OCTAVIUS's Discipline Policy. Members may also be personally liable for any acts of discrimination prohibited by this policy that they commit, meaning that they can be sued by the victim.

When does this policy apply?

This policy applies to all conduct in the workplace and also to conduct outside of the workplace that is related to your work (e.g., at meetings, social events and social interactions with colleagues) or which may impact on OCTAVIUS's reputation (e.g., the expression of views on social media, contrary to the commitments expressed in this policy, that could be linked to OCTAVIUS).

We set out below some specific areas of application:

a) Selection for membership at OCTAVIUS will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. Further detail is set out in OCTAVIUS's membership Policy. Where possible, OCTAVIUS will capture applicants' diversity demographics as part of its processes to promote the elimination of unlawful discrimination.
b) Training, you may also be required to participate in training and development activities from time to time, to encourage the promotion of the principles of this policy.
c) Promotion All promotion decisions will be made on the basis of merit and will not be influenced by any of the protected characteristics listed above. Promotion opportunities will be monitored to ensure equality of opportunity at all levels. Where appropriate, steps will be taken to identify and remove unnecessary or unjustifiable barriers to promotion.
d) During membership, the benefits, terms and conditions of membership and facilities available to OCTAVIUS members will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that access is not restricted by unlawful means and to provide appropriate conditions to meet the special needs of disadvantaged or under-represented groups.

OCTAVIUS's legal duties

OCTAVIUS is additionally subject to any equality duties under the Equality Act 2010 and other legislation. This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis by OCTAVIUS to assess its effectiveness and may be amended from time to time.

Equality and diversity declaration

I have read and understood OCTAVIUS's Equality and Diversity Policy and agree to keep to the expected standards. Regardless of my background and circumstances, I agree to treat all persons with respect and dignity while carrying out the duties and responsibilities of my role at OCTAVIUS.

Once received you are deemed to have agreed to follow the guidance of this equality and diversity policy.

Date

28/05/2019

ANNEX

There are various types of discrimination prohibited by this policy. The main types are:

1. **Direct discrimination**
   Direct discrimination occurs where one person is treated less favourably than another because of a protected characteristic set out in this policy. By way of example, refusing to promote a pregnant member on the basis that she is shortly due to go on maternity leave would be direct discrimination on the protected characteristic of the member's sex.
   Other types of direct discrimination are:
   - **Associative discrimination** – this is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic. For example, a member is discriminated against because his/her son is disabled.
   - **Perceptive discrimination** – this is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. For example, where co-members believe the individual is gay. It applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic.

2. **Indirect discrimination**
   Indirect discrimination occurs when an unjustifiable requirement or condition is applied, which appears to be the same for all, but which has a disproportionate, adverse effect on one group of people. This is discrimination even though there was no intention to discriminate. For example, a requirement for UK based qualifications could disadvantage applicants who have obtained their qualifications outside of the UK; this could amount to indirect discrimination on the grounds of race.

3. **Victimisation**
   Victimisation is where a member is treated less favourably than others because they have asserted legal rights against OCTAVIUS or assisted a colleague in doing so. For example, victimisation may occur where member has raised a genuine grievance against OCTAVIUS and is demoted as a result.

4. **Harassment**
   Harassment is "unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual." It is important to remember that it is not the intention of the harasser but how the recipient perceives their behaviour, which determines whether harassment has occurred. Please see OCTAVIUS's Harassment Policy, for further details of how OCTAVIUS will deal with bullying and harassment.