

**Diversity and Equal Opportunities Policy**

**2023 – 2024**



For the purposes of this document, the term ‘AT’ refers to all WMC Associate Teachers

**Intent**

The West Midlands Consortium is committed to promoting diversity and practicing equality of opportunity. The Consortium aims to create a culture and environment for ATs and staff to be treated equitably regardless of race, ethnic origin, nationality, gender, disability, age, religion, sexual orientation, marital or parental status, political belief or social-economic group.
We want to build an institution that is truly inclusive; that understands, appreciates and values the diversity of each individual and incorporates measures that make people feel valued and able to participate and achieve their full potential. Our diversity is our strength. The West Midlands Consortium is committed to tackling discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity and good race relations.

**Implementation**

This policy covers all areas of staff and AT life. It ensures that the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 are met in full. The policy ensures firm action is taken to redress inequality wherever possible.

The following equal opportunity related codes, policies and procedures identifies the
West Midlands Consortium’s Diversity and Equal Opportunities Policy.

**Race**

**The West Midlands Consortium will:**

* Recognise its general duty under the Equality Act to promote race equality. In carrying out our functions, the Consortium will have due regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination and promoting good race relations between persons of different racial groups.
* Create a positive, inclusive atmosphere, based on respect for peoples’ differences, and show commitment to challenging and preventing racism and discrimination.
* Take specific and proactive action to tackle any differences between racial groups in the treatment/success of the following: For staff – recruitment/selection, promotion/progression and retention. For ATs – recruitment/admissions, achievement levels/progress and assessment. For all groups - in the use of disciplinary measures against them.
* Aim to make our workforce more representative of the communities we serve by seeking to employ more ethnic minority staff.
* Make full use of the skills and knowledge of people from different groups (for example, in the classroom, in staff training or as members of governing bodies).
* Assess the impact of policies, practices and procedures on ATs and staff from different racial groups.

**Gender**

**The West Midlands Consortium will:**

* Take proactive action to improve the gender balance within underrepresented areas across its Initial Teacher Training programmes.
* Maintain and extend training practices and support to help individuals achieve an appropriate balance between work and their lives outside work.

**Disability**

The term 'disabilities' covers a wide range of conditions including physical and mobility difficulties, deaf and hard of hearing, blind and partially sighted, specific learning difficulties including dyslexia, medical conditions and mental health problems. Some disabilities may be long-term, others may be temporary.

**The West Midlands Consortium:**

* Offers a supportive environment for any employee/AT with a disability.
* Is committed to taking positive action to welcome persons with disabilities and to enable them to reach their full potential.
* Will, in all policies, procedures and activities, including strategic planning and resource allocation, provide consideration to the means of enabling disabled ATs’ participation in all aspects of the academic and social life of the Consortium.
* Will meet our statutory requirements under the Equality Act not to discriminate against persons with a disability either in the process of recruitment or whilst employed/studying with the West Midlands Consortium.
* Will give clear information and advice about the practical issues which may be encountered by an individual in their chosen programme of study.

**Harassment**

Harassment is defined as unwanted behaviour (verbal or physical) that may be personally humiliating, offensive, abusive or intimidating. Harassment can occur in areas of race, ethnic origin, nationality, sex, sexuality, religious or political convictions, age and disabilities. It can also involve bullying linked to inequalities of status and position; gender and sexuality; race and ethnicity.

**The West Midlands Consortium aims to achieve a culture which is free from harassment and to foster this by:**

* Staff and ATs can challenge all forms of harassment.
* Incidents can be dealt with quickly and effectively.
* Individuals have the confidence and support to bring complaints without fear of ridicule or reprisal.
* Individuals take personal responsibility to ensure that the dignity of staff and ATs’ is not abused or demeaned.

**Widening Participation Strategy**

The West Midlands Consortium is always keen to widen participation.

**The West Midlands Consortium will:**

* Establish clear routes into the Consortium for under-represented groups in Higher Education and ensure that the appropriate mechanisms are in place to support non-traditional ATs.
* Increase our profile in the region and nationally.
* Respond positively to the national widening participation initiatives.

**Monitoring**

Monitoring data will help the West Midlands Consortium to identify differences between groups of ATs in terms of teaching and learning; non-completion rates; student progression and achievement; assessment; access to learning resources; support and guidance; and curricular and other opportunities, so it can begin to address them.

**Data will be processed in line with the requirements and protections set out in the UK General Data Protection Regulation.**

**Responsibility/Accountability**

The Chair of the West Midlands Consortium Management Group has ultimate responsibility for the development and implementation of diversity and equal opportunities policies. All activities of the West Midlands Consortium are covered by this policy.

Each member of staff and each AT has a responsibility to support the implementation of this policy. The West Midlands Consortium’s Disciplinary Policies for staff and ATs will be used if necessary to ensure that the ‘policy’ is followed.