

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY – VOLUNTEERS

The Institution of Engineering and Technology
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1 Why we have this policy

- 1.1 The IET is an inclusive organisation that is fully committed to the principles of fair treatment and to valuing diversity. The IET recognises that by encouraging and managing equality and diversity in our activities and by eliminating discrimination we can more effectively deliver our objectives and meet the needs of our membership, customers and staff.
- 1.2 The IET provides services which embrace diversity and promote inclusion and equality of opportunity. The IET's goal is to ensure that its commitment, reinforced by its values, is embedded in its working practices with all volunteers, staff and other stakeholders.
- 1.3 To reflect its commitment, the IET is one of many professional engineering institutions to have signed up to the [Diversity in Engineering Concordat](#) and pledge commitment to equality in the profession.

2 Who this policy applies to

- 2.1 This policy applies to all volunteers engaged in activities supporting and delivering the IET's objectives. Members of staff are required to abide by an equivalent policy.

3 Other relevant documents

- 3.1 Volunteers should also make sure they have read and understand:
 - 3.1.1 The IET's [Volunteer Code of Conduct](#)
 - 3.1.2 The IET's [Rules of Conduct](#)
 - 3.1.3 The IET's [Harassment and Bullying Policy](#) for Volunteers

4 Statement of policy

- 4.1 The IET is fully committed to both the spirit and letter of the law in relation to equal opportunities and anti-discrimination.
- 4.2 The IET's membership, volunteers, staff and those that it provides services for come from diverse backgrounds, with aspirations, needs and experiences. Products and services are open to all and designed to ensure that no individual or group is excluded from access.
- 4.3 The principle of equal opportunities governs every aspect of the IET's activities including those supported by and delivered by volunteers. All current and potential volunteers, members, customers and other stakeholders will not receive any less favourable treatment on account of any of the following characteristics:
 - 4.3.1 age;
 - 4.3.2 disability (physical or hidden);
 - 4.3.3 gender reassignment;
 - 4.3.4 marriage or civil partnership status;
 - 4.3.5 race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins;
 - 4.3.6 religion or belief;
 - 4.3.7 sex;
 - 4.3.8 sexual orientation; or
 - 4.3.9 pregnancy and maternity.

- 4.4 The IET will provide training on equality, diversity and inclusion for volunteers and staff where it is appropriate and relevant to their roles. This is to raise awareness of diversity issues, help individuals follow best practice and work inclusively, and to explain the legislation.
- 4.5 Information about IET activities and how these are carried out will be presented in a clear and meaningful way to current and potential members, volunteers, staff and other stakeholders, in ways that best suit their individual needs.

5 Equality principles

- 5.1 There should be no discrimination, whether direct or indirect, because of any of the characteristics set out in paragraph 4.3 above.
- 5.2 Discrimination may occur in the following ways:
 - 5.2.1 **direct discrimination**—this is treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic. An example of this is not allowing someone access to a service because of their sex or because they belong to a particular racial group. 'Because of' is very wide and includes less favourable treatment based on a perception of another person, for example that the person is gay, or is disabled, whether or not this perception is correct and even if the volunteer knows that their perception is, in fact, wrong. It also includes less favourable treatment because someone is associated with another person who has a protected characteristic.
 - 5.2.2 **indirect discrimination**—this is ostensibly treating people in the same way but in a way which actually adversely affects those with a protected characteristic. An example of this could be consistently to expect people to attend meetings in the evenings which could exclude those with child-care responsibilities.
 - 5.2.3 **victimisation**—this is treating someone less favourably because they have asserted their right not to be discriminated against because of a protected characteristic. An example of this would be treating a volunteer colleague differently because they had previously made a claim of discrimination.
 - 5.2.4 **harassment**—this is unwanted conduct, related to a protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for someone or violating their dignity. Harassment may also be of a sexual nature or may occur because someone has harassed the victim and the victim either rejects or submits to it and, because of that rejection or submission, that person treats the victim less favourably. More information on what can constitute harassment is set out in the IET's harassment and bullying policy for volunteers.

6 Expectations on volunteers

- 6.1 Volunteers will be perceived by members, the public and the IET's partners to be acting on behalf of the IET. This means that if they unlawfully discriminate, whether intentionally or not, whilst undertaking their roles, both the volunteer and the IET could be held legally responsible.
- 6.2 Therefore all volunteers have personal responsibility for the practical application of the IET's equality policy, which extends to the treatment of members, employees, customers and other stakeholders.
- 6.3 The principles set out in this policy apply in any IET-related context, such as at meetings or events, in any assessment or during interviews. Your behaviour reflects on the IET and accordingly, volunteers are expected to:
 - 6.3.1 Treat everyone they come into contact fairly and with respect;

- 6.3.2 Challenge discrimination wherever it occurs, and report any perceived infringement of this policy to a member of staff;
 - 6.3.3 Promote an environment free from discrimination by removing unnecessary barriers, including attitudes (stereotyping, unconscious bias and prejudice), organisationally (e.g. inflexible or inappropriate policies, practices and procedures), and environmentally (e.g. using inaccessible venues or services);
 - 6.3.4 View equality, diversity and inclusion as assets that helps deliver the IET's vision of an inclusive organisation and meet the needs of its membership and society;
 - 6.3.5 Where appropriate, seek out opportunities to encourage under-represented groups to participate and ensure the promotion of opportunities to them;
 - 6.3.6 Encourage anyone associated with the IET to promote equal opportunities in the UK and throughout the world, whilst being aware of local laws and customs that may apply outside the UK. (See <http://www.ecu.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/external/equality-act-abroad.pdf>); and
 - 6.3.7 Ensure that all services delivered on behalf of the IET are fairly and appropriately accessible.
- 6.4 The IET's 'Working Together: Resolving Disagreement and Concerns' guidance is available to any volunteer who believes that they may have been unfairly discriminated against. Please contact the Volunteer Support Unit (volunteer@theiet.org) for a copy of this guidance. Volunteers will not be victimised in any way for making such a complaint in good faith. Complaints of this nature will be dealt with seriously, in confidence and as soon as possible.

7 What happens if you do not follow this policy

- 7.1 All volunteers, regardless of the country in which they undertake their activities, are expected to abide by this policy, which is based on the laws of England and Wales as well as on best practice. In the event that a volunteer is concerned that some aspect of this policy may not be aligned with local law, they should contact the Volunteer Support Unit in the first instance.
- 7.2 Discriminating against individuals has many consequences. Among them are:
- 7.2.1 Our business may suffer from a lack of skills and experience that are useful to us as an organisation and in the work that we do;
 - 7.2.2 If the IET is found guilty of discrimination it could be subject to fines or other legal consequences. Individuals have vicarious liability;
 - 7.2.3 The IET may suffer severe reputational damage. Other institutions and companies we work with may refuse to work with us;
 - 7.2.4 Good people will not want to work for us.
- 7.3 Any volunteer who is found to have committed an act of unlawful discrimination may be subject to disciplinary procedures. Allegations that are not made in good faith may also be considered as a disciplinary matter.

Appendix

Control Sheet

Policy

Document owner: Sandra Godman – Head of Volunteer Support
Document reviewer: Sandra Godman and Jo Foster – Diversity and Inclusion Manager
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Next review date: 1 December 2020

Review/change history

Date of Review/Change	Summary of changes	Version no.
August 2012	Initial draft based on staff policy.	0.1
July 2013	Approved version for release.	1.0
July 2014	Revised draft to reflect IET signing up to the Diversity in Engineering Concordat .	1.1
December 2014	Final draft approved by Volunteer Support Working Party.	2.0
January 2016	Reviewed – no changes required.	2.0
February 2017	Reviewed – no changes required.	2.0
January 2018	New version to update terminology, reference to other documents, and make more generic and applicable to the wide variety of IET volunteer activities.	3.0