

Fair Access and Equality of Opportunity Policy

Introduction

This policy sets out the principles that ICME follows in ensuring that the design, development, delivery and award of our End-point Assessment qualifications enables fair access for all Apprentices to ensure Equality and Diversity principles and legislation is at the forefront of that. We are committed to ensuring that we meet the needs of an individual apprentice without affecting the integrity of the End-point Assessment process. Our access arrangements ensure that we comply with the Equality Act 2010.

This policy sets out ICME's intention to deliver an EPA service and a range of apprenticeship qualifications that are fair, accessible and do not include any unnecessary barriers to entry. ICME incorporate specific and appropriate duties in respect of implementing the Fair Access policy into work objectives for all staff involved in the delivery of end-point assessment. ICME staff will be provided training as appropriate in line with the fair access policy.

This aim of this policy is to ensure all ICME End-point Assessment Apprenticeship Standards are accessible for all Apprentices and do not discriminate against anyone. Fair Access is a principle around ensuring that all apprentices have an equal chance of success by putting in place appropriate reasonable adjustments. The adjustments must not advantage the apprentice nor affect the integrity of the end point assessment. At ICME we fully support the principles and working practices of Equal Opportunities, which are embedded into our ethos and practices. We support this principle and oppose all unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of;

- Age
- Ability
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Martial or civil partnership status
- Domestic circumstances
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Racial group
- Religion or beliefs
- Sexual Orientation
- Colour
- Culture
- Social background
- Employment Status
- Any other grounds or status

This policy also sets out clear principles to clarify the expectations of all parties to support fair access processes and procedures to ensure End-point Assessment operates effectively and to ensure fair access in practice to the End-point Assessment (EPA) for apprentices.

Those handling any requests for reasonable adjustments should also refer to relevant quality assurance and assessment information (this may be provided by the trailblazer apprenticeship group, qualification awarding organisation or other stakeholders such as the Institute for Apprenticeships or Education and Skills Funding Agency). This policy uses as its reference the Joint Council of Qualifications guidance on access arrangements and reasonable adjustments.

Review arrangements

At ICME we shall review the policy annually as part of our self-evaluation arrangements to ensure that it is fit for purpose and that it continues to reflect the requirements of End Point Assessment.

However, a review will be commissioned earlier should any issues arise in relation to any findings through review processes or changes to legislation.

Any review of policies are signed off by Finance and General Purposes committee (F&GP) before being issued.

Document Version History

Issue Date	Author	Summary of Changes	Date of next Review
12/11/20	A Worrallo	Creation of Policy	November 2021

Definition

The Equality Act 2010 collaborates over 110 separate pieces of legislation and combines it into one single Act. Combined, these make up an Act that provides a legal framework that protects the rights of individuals from various forms of discrimination and harassment. This is broken down into elements, these elements;

Direct Discrimination – When an individual or group of people are treated less favourably than another person because of your characteristic or disability.

Indirect Discrimination – This is when a rule, policy or practice is applied to everyone, but it has a particular disadvantage to people with a characteristic or disability.

Protected Characteristics – These are characteristics that are protected by the law. It's unlawful to discriminate, both directly and indirectly, because of;

- Age
- Disability
- Sex
- Gender Reassignment
- Pregnancy
- Maternity
- Race – which includes colour, nationality and ethnic/national origins
- Sexual Orientation
- Religion or belief
- Marriage or Civil Partnership

All of the above are known as protected characteristics.

A copy of the Equality Act 2010 can be found here:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

Guidance on the Equality Act 2010 can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>

Advice on equality can be found here: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en>

How will ICME ensure Fair Access and Equality of Opportunity?

ICME will take all possible steps to ensure that our End-point Assessment provision is fair for all Apprentices accessing our provision from design and development through to assessment and delivery and awarding End-point Assessment.

To ensure we comply with the Equality Act 2010 ICME will;

- Apply the Fair Access by design guidelines maintained by Ofqual, to ensure qualifications and End-point Assessment provision is designed and developed to be as accessible as possible
- We will not discriminate, victimise or harass any individual or groups of people identified within the Equality Law/Legislation
- We will monitor and review the effectiveness of this policy and utilise self-assessment practices to look for ways to improve our provision
- We will make this policy readily available to Apprentices, employers, Training providers and ICME staff, including making it available on our website
- Review materials through the design and development stage to review the Equality Impact
- Produce materials to support our assessments and provision that comply with Equality Law
- Ensure language in ICME materials is clear, free from bias and appropriate to those accessing our provision
- Ensure robust Quality Assurance processes to review and monitor the delivery and assessment of our provision
- Arrange development sessions/events for our staff and external contractors involved in the design, development, delivery, assessment and award of End-point assessment
- Collect, monitor and review available data relating to Apprentice achievements to identify and/or detect accidental bias in line with GDPR
- Provide Access Arrangement processes for those Apprentices who require reasonable adjustments or special considerations to access our provision fairly without impacting the assessment
- Ensuring fairness in the application of all access arrangements for End-point assessments
- Ensuring that Apprentices with a protected characteristic are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged in End-point assessments in comparison to Apprentices who do not share that characteristic, ensuring that all achievement in End-point assessments is fair and comparable
- Ensuring that adequate monitoring and reviewing of Equality and Diversity is completed throughout the process of designing, developing and delivering End-point assessment products and services
- Ensuring that ICME considers all access requests relating to End-point assessments that are received, except where acceptance of the request is not logistically possible or where acceptance would undermine the reliability or integrity of the assessment
- Incorporate specific and appropriate duties in respect of implementing the fair access policy into the work objectives of all staff s involved in the delivery of the End-point assessment provision
- Provide Equality training and guidance as appropriate to our staff and contractors, as part of their induction plan as well as further on-going training/support

Qualification Development

ICME will ensure when designing and developing our End-point Assessment material that there are no barriers that could disadvantage any groups of Apprentices that share a particular characteristic, and allow application of reasonable adjustments where necessary to ensure assessments can be undertaken without discrimination.

Quality Assurance

ICME will ensure through our robust quality assurance processes attention is paid to ensure our qualification materials and resources are accessible to all Apprentices. We will do this through;

- Monitoring assessment materials
- Offering reasonable adjustments to Apprentices who may not be able to fully demonstrate their abilities through the End-point Assessments, providing that these arrangements do not affect the standard and outcome of the assessment

- Monitor all complaints, enquiries and appeals that may suggest discriminatory practice

How will we monitor the success and relevance of our arrangements?

As part of the registration and award process for End-point Assessment ICME may collect information on;

- Diversity
- Access Arrangements & Special Considerations requests
- Feedback from Apprentices, Training Providers and Employers

Any issues that are identified and suggest that ICME's provision or services may have unnecessarily impacted an Apprentice will be reported to the EPA Quality Manager, who can review the provision, services and materials to make appropriate changes/amendments. The details of on-going reviews will be made available to End-point assessment regulators upon request.

What should I do if I have an issue?

Should an Apprentice, employer or training provider want to discuss or report an equality issue, please contact ICME via the contact details found below. We will work with individuals/groups to ensure that fair access and equality of opportunity is promoted throughout all of our services and provision. We will also work with those individuals to ensure that unfair or unlawful discrimination, that is both direct or indirect is eliminated.

Should you wish to make a complaint then please see our Complaints policy.

Contact us

To discuss an equality issue, please email it to epainfo@icme.org.uk, call us on 0121 752 1810 or post it to:

ICME EPA INSTITUTE OF CAST METALS & ENGINEERS
The National Foundry Training Centre
ECMS
Tipton Road
Tipton
West Midlands
DY4 7UW

GDPR

We may need to access confidential information, ICME will ensure that such information is kept secure and only used for the purposes of the investigation in line with relevant GDPR legislation. ICME will not normally disclose the information to third parties unless required to do so in instances such as with regulators/awarding bodies or law enforcement. For more information, please access our Privacy Statement at our website or view our Privacy Policy.

Contact us and guidance

If you have any queries about the contents of this policy or wish to gain further guidance or give feedback please contact 0121 7521810 or email epainfo@icme.org.uk

