



## **Employment Code of Practice on Equal Opportunities and Diversity**

Employees have a right to equal opportunity. LAVAT Consulting Limited (trading as Public Sector Taxation or 'PSTAX') seeks to provide a clear and effective programme of equal opportunity to make full use of the abilities of the entire workforce.

### **A. Recruitment**

1. When advertising job vacancies, PSTAX will ensure that advertisements:
  - Are placed in publications that do not restrict or exclude applicants on grounds of race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion/belief or age.
  - Do not prescribe requirements unrelated to the actual requirements of the job.
  - Address issues of under representation by placement in community centres/newsletters/newspapers where this will facilitate a wider potential audience.
2. When using employment agencies and job centres PSTAX will ensure that the agency operates an equal opportunities policy. Recruitment will not be confined unjustifiably to those agencies or job centres.
3. PSTAX will not recruit solely through the recommendations of existing employees.
4. Selection criteria and tests will relate to job requirements only. In particular:
  - A standard of English higher than that needed for the safe and effective performance of the job or clearly demonstrable career pattern will not be required.
  - Applicants will not be disqualified because they are unable to complete an application form unassisted unless personal completion of the form is a valid test of the standard of English required for safe and effective performance of the job.
  - PSTAX will accept overseas qualifications where equivalence is established.
  - Reasonable adaptations and adjustments will be made to the recruitment process to secure accessibility for applicants with disabilities.
  - Selection tests which contain irrelevant questions or exercises on matters which may be unfamiliar to ethnic minority applicants will not be used (for example, general knowledge questions on matters more likely to be familiar to indigenous applicants).

### **B. Shortlisting, interviewing and selection**

1. Staff responsible for shortlisting, interviewing and selection of candidates are:
  - clearly informed of selection criteria and of the need for their consistent application.

- given guidance or training to the effects which generalised assumptions and prejudices about gender, race, disability, age, religion/belief and sexual orientation can have on selection decisions.
  - made aware of the possible misunderstandings that can occur in interviews between persons of different cultural background.
2. Wherever possible, shortlisting and interviewing will be done by all members of the selection panel.
  3. Shortlisting decisions will be based on the information provided by applicants measured against the criteria listed in the person specification.
  4. All applicants with a disability who match the essential criteria will be invited to interview in accordance with PSTAX's adherence to the Disability Symbol user principles.
  5. Reasonable adaptations and adjustments will be made to the selection process to secure accessibility for applicants with disabilities.
  6. Recruitment and selection outcomes will be monitored to assess the impact of those decisions and the results published annually.

**C. Genuine occupational requirements**

Where applicable, GOR classifications will be applied.

**D. Terms of employment, benefits, facilities and services**

1. It is unlawful to discriminate on grounds of gender, race, disability, sexual orientation or religion/belief in affording terms of employment and providing benefits, facilities and services for employees and in some provisions regarding age. Employment policies will be applied consistently and without unlawful discrimination.
2. Personnel policies and procedures will be monitored in order to assess whether equal opportunities is being achieved.
3. Equal pay principles will be applied by PSTAX.

**E. Training**

1. Training and development opportunities and the application procedure will be made known to all employees, in such a way as to ensure that no group is excluded or disproportionately under represented.
2. Staff responsible for selecting employees for training, whether induction, promotion or skill training will not apply selection criteria in a discriminatory manner.
4. Selection criteria for training opportunities will be monitored to ensure that they are not indirectly discriminatory.

**F. Dismissal (including redundancy) and other detriment**

1. Staff responsible for selecting employees for dismissal, including redundancy, will not apply criteria in a discriminatory manner.
2. Selection criteria for redundancies will be examined to ensure that they are not indirectly discriminatory.

**G. Grievance, disputes and disciplinary procedures**

1. It is unlawful to discriminate in the operation of grievance, disputes and disciplinary procedures, for example by victimising an individual through disciplinary measures because s/he has complained about discrimination, or given evidence about such a complaint. PSTAX will not ignore or treat lightly grievances from members of staff about victimisation or discrimination.
2. In applying disciplinary procedures consideration will be given to the possible effect on an employee's behaviour of the following:
  - Provocation of a discriminatory nature.
  - Communication and comprehension difficulties.
  - Differences in cultural background or behaviour.

**H. Communications and language training for employees**

1. Difficulties in communication can endanger equal opportunity in the workforce. In addition, good communications can improve efficiency, promotion prospects, health and safety and create a better understanding between employers, employees and unions. Where the workforce includes current employees whose English is limited PSTAX will ensure that communications are as effective as possible.
2. PSTAX will seek to provide, where reasonably practicable:
  - Provision of interpretation and translation facilities, for example, in the communication of grievance and other procedures, and of terms of employment where individual employees are unable to access the current format because of language or disability.
  - Training for managers and supervisors in the background and culture of ethnic minority groups.
  - The use of alternative or additional methods of communication, where employees find it difficult to understand health and safety requirements.
  - Encourage the use of signing and community languages to promote positive communication.

## **I. Monitoring equal opportunity**

1. PSTAX will regularly monitor the effects of selection decisions, personnel policies and procedures to assess whether equal opportunities in employment are being achieved.

## **J. Positive action**

1. Positive measures are allowed by the law to encourage employees and potential employees and provide training for employees who are members of particular groups who have been underrepresented in particular work. Discrimination at the point of selection for work, however, is not permissible in these circumstances.
2. Where under representation is identified then positive action will be taken including wherever appropriate and reasonably practicable:
  - Job advertisements designed to reach members of these groups and to encourage their applications: for example, through the use of the ethnic minority press, as well as other newspapers.
  - Use of the specialist employment agencies and careers offices in areas where these groups are concentrated.
  - Encouragement to employees from these groups to apply for vacancies, promotion or transfer opportunities.
  - Training for promotion or skill training for employees within these groups who lack particular expertise but show potential

## **K. The responsibilities of individual employees**

1. While the primary responsibility for providing equal opportunities rests with the employer, individual employees at all levels have responsibilities too. The following actions by individual employees would be unlawful:
  - Unlawful discrimination in the course of their employment against fellow employees or job applicants.
  - Inducing, or attempting to induce other employees, unions or management to practice unlawful discrimination. For example, they should not refuse to accept other employees from particular racial groups or refuse to work with a supervisor of a particular racial group.
  - Victimising individuals who have made allegations or complaints of discrimination or provided information about such discrimination.
2. To assist in preventing discrimination and promoting equal opportunities all employees must:
  - Co-operate in measures introduced by management designed to ensure equal opportunity and non-discrimination.
  - Draw attention of management and, where appropriate, their trade unions to suspected discriminatory acts or practices.
  - Refrain from harassment or intimidation of other employees,
  - Co-operate in diversity training programmes.

- Where appropriate, participate in discussions with employers and unions, to find solutions to issues of under representation.
- Understand that any breach of this code of practice would be a breach of disciplinary rules.

Signed: 

Peter Gladdish  
Managing Director

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