



## Equality and Diversity Policy

### 1. Policy Purpose

1<sup>st</sup> for EPA is committed to providing equality of opportunity and demonstrating anti-discriminatory practices throughout all areas of our operations. This policy sets out the ways we do this throughout the design, delivery and award of end point assessment.

### 2. Our Practices

Within the organisation we:

- Provide a secure environment for our staff.
- Promote diversity amongst our workforce.
- Support an inclusive working environment.
- Value the contribution of all staff members and embed an ethos of equality and diversity.
- Support staff who have a disability or specific need .
- Use images that are inclusive and promote diversity.
- Improve our knowledge and understanding of issues of equality and diversity.

Within our assessment operations, we:

- Listen to employers' and training providers' needs.
- Have open conversations about any apprentices needs within the EPA process.
- Understand the need to make reasonable adjustments for apprentices.
- Demonstrate an awareness of how to carry out assessment for apprentices with specific language difficulties.
- Do not put barriers in the way of conducting end point assessment activities.
- Ensure our assessment materials do not disadvantage apprentices with a shared characteristic.
- Demonstrate an awareness of the protected characteristics and make reasonable adjustments.

The legal framework for this policy includes The Equality Act 2010, (which incorporates the Equal Pay Act 1970, Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Race Relations Act 1976, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Human Rights Act 1998) and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.

### 3. Staff Recruitment

When advertising for staff to join our organisation we aim to:

- Open up opportunities to recruit staff from a diverse range of backgrounds.
- Advertise for job roles that reach a broad audience.



- Encourage applications from those who have disabilities and specific needs.
- Not disadvantage applicants by location and ability to access venues.
- Ensure all applicants are judged against explicit and fair criteria.
- Support new employees in accessing the relevant software and resources to carry out their role effectively.
- Provide opportunities to engage in onboarding training and have one-to-one support where required.
- Ensure there is equal pay for assessors carrying out the same role on the same standard.

The applicant who best meets the criteria is offered the post, subject to references and the necessary checks. This ensures fairness in the selection process. We monitor our application process to ensure that it is fair and accessible. 1<sup>st</sup> for EPA is committed to demonstrating practices that maintain diversity and show good moral conduct.

#### **4. Accessing our Services**

We welcome a range of employers and training providers to access our services. We anticipate apprentices will be currently working in an environment that matches the nature of the end point assessment they are working towards. To ensure we do not limit the ability to access our end point assessment services, we adopt the following practices:

- We promote our service widely.
- We reflect the diversity of members of our society in our publicity and promotional materials.
- We provide information in clear, concise language, whether in spoken or written form.
- We ensure our assessment does not discriminate against any person or group based on any of the protected characteristics.
- We ensure that all apprentices are made aware of this equal and diversity policy.
- We have a Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy, allowing apprentices with disabilities to participate in end point assessment and demonstrate their level of competence without disadvantage.

#### **5. Assessment Activities**

At 1<sup>st</sup> for EPA, we make every effort to demonstrate inclusivity in the design, delivery and award of end point assessment. We set out clearly how end point assessment activities are assessed and what the basic requirements are for accessing our services (e.g. internet connection)

In order to remove any barriers to participation, we:

- Ensure apprentices, employers and training providers have equality of access to information and learning materials.
- Avoid stereotypes or derogatory images in the selection of materials.



- Work closely with the training provider and employer to accommodate dates and times for assessment.
- Ensure accessibility of our platforms and provide guidance on how to use them.
- Provide messages, updates and guidance in a suitable format.

During the delivery of our assessments we:

- Encourage our assessors to promote an environment of mutual respect.
- Help assessors to understand discriminatory behaviour is unacceptable.
- Ensure any reasonable adjustment offered is inclusive for apprentices with special educational needs and ensure the assessor understands how to carry out these adjustments.
- Ensure that apprentices whose first language is not English are able to undertake the end point assessment without bias.

## **6. Valuing Diversity**

We welcome the diversity of our apprentices and we acknowledge the range of workplace backgrounds they come from. We encourage apprentices to introduce themselves and discuss the unique features of their role and organisation. We are mindful of the differences in job roles and take this into account when carrying out the assessment activities and making our assessment decisions. We encourage apprentices to discuss their experiences without fear of discrimination or judgement. For apprentices who have a first language other than English, we value the contribution their culture and language offer.

## **7. Policy Review**

This policy was last updated 3 February 2021. It will be reviewed annually and as legislation requires.