



# Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board

## Equality Policy

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## Purpose

Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board (hereinafter referred to as WWETB), is committed to providing a working and learning environment that is free from discrimination of any kind and to promoting diversity, fairness and equity in matters of learning, recruitment, promotion, terms and conditions of employment and access to training and development. This is a requirement under the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 and the WWETB statement on Human Rights and Equality.

## Scope

The policy sets out the commitment of WWETB to ensuring equality of opportunity, experience and outcome for all learners, staff and prospective staff in relation to engagement with the WWETB.

## Definitions

This policy is applicable to all employees and learners within the ETB and will be brought to the attention of all suppliers and contractors.

## Policy

- In accordance with the provisions of the Employment Equality Acts, 1998 & 2004 and the Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 and with reference to the WWETB Human Rights and Equality Statement, WWETB has developed the following policy and procedures which ensures that in matters of equality, it does not discriminate directly or indirectly on the grounds of gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, race or membership of the traveller community.
- Any form of discrimination, either direct or indirect, which impedes achievement of full equality of opportunity, experience or outcome in work or learning is not acceptable.
- It is the responsibility of every member of staff to ensure that equality of opportunity, experience and outcome for all is respected in the organisation.
- It is the responsibility of the Human Resources Department to ensure that every member of staff is aware of her/ his obligations under employment and equality legislation and that she/ he does not engage in discriminatory behaviour in the course of her/ his work.
- WWETB will ensure that those who are involved in recruitment and selection interviewing are briefed so that they are aware of employment and equality legislation and its implications

### 1.1 Recruitment and Selection

- Every applicant for employment, education or training with WWETB is assured that the only criteria for success in recruitment and selection are merit. Similarly in the context of career progression and development, every member of staff will be afforded equal opportunity to compete for promotional posts and to develop her/ his skills and talents.

All recruitment documentation for employment including job descriptions, application forms and advertisements are designed so as to:

- Encourage applications from all suitably qualified and experienced candidates
- Exclude any items of a discriminatory nature
- State explicitly WWETB's commitment to equality of opportunity.

All recruitment documentation for participation in education and training including, application forms and advertisements are designed so as to:

- Be available in a variety of formats that make them widely accessible
  - Encourage applications from all potential learners from all backgrounds and areas
  - Exclude any items of a discriminatory nature
  - State explicitly WWETB's commitment to equality of opportunity
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- In relation to selection of interview boards WWETB will, as far as is practicable be gender balanced.
  - Interview boards will be formed in accordance with Department of Education and Skills guidelines and each member of an interview will be furnished with a copy of WWETB's recruitment and selection policy which sets out the interview process, including the requirement to avoid questions and statements which could be construed as discriminatory. The Chairman of the interview board and the personnel member will ensure that the process is fair and equitable.
  - The interview board will guard against making assumptions about the suitability of candidates for types of work, based on personal or other criteria not relevant to the post.
  - The criteria used for assessment purposes are to be clearly specified and recorded for each competition.
  - All records in relation to the recruitment process are to be kept on file for two years before being discarded.

## 1.2 Training and Development

- Every member of staff is entitled to equal access to training and development as it arises during the course of her/ his employment both in respect of on and off the job training.
- Work assignments are to be arranged with a view to ensuring that all members of staff in a grade have an equal opportunity to carry out the full range of tasks, including the most demanding of the grade.
- Assumptions by management regarding the suitability of certain types of work to a specific category may not be made. In addition, assumptions by management about future career intentions or family responsibilities that may adversely affect decisions in relation to a person's access to employment, training or work experience may not be made.

### 1.3 Promotions and Career Development

- All members of staff must be made aware of the career opportunities available in WWETB and encouraged to avail of them.
- All vacancies will be advertised as is required by Departmental Circulars or established agreements.
- Principals/Managers/Coordinators will, as far as is reasonably practicable, ensure that every member of staff has equal access to relevant training and work experience so that she/he is adequately equipped to compete for posts which arise.

### 1.4 Work and Family Responsibilities

- WWETB affirms its commitment to providing family friendly working arrangements such as job-sharing, career breaks, and flexible working hours in so far as this is practicable and can be accommodated without adversely impacting on service delivery.
- All members of staff are made aware of the initiatives available to them, including career breaks, job-sharing schemes, flexible working times, part-time work etc.
- Members of staff who wish to avail of these working arrangements should discuss the matter with their principal/manager/coordinator, who will, subject to the needs of the particular service, ensure that those wishing to do so, are accommodated within the confines of maintaining the service.

### 1.5 Employment of Persons with Disabilities

In the context of employment, the term “persons with disabilities”, means persons with:-

- The total or partial absence of mental or bodily functions, including the absence of a part of a person’s body.
- The presence in the body of organisms causing, or likely to cause, chronic disease or illness.
- The malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of part of a person’s body.
- A condition or malfunction which results in a person learning differently from a person without the condition or malfunction or
- A condition, illness or disease which affects a person’s thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment or which results in disturbed behaviour
- It includes a disability which exists at present, or which previously existed but no longer exists, or which may exist in the future or which is imputed to a person
- Physical, sensory or psychological impairment which may have a tangible impact on their functional capability to do a particular job or have an impact on their ability to function in a particular physical environment.
- Lead to discrimination in obtaining or keeping employment of a kind for which they would otherwise be suited.

WWETB is committed to the principle of equal opportunities, experience and opportunity for persons with a disability and in particular, is committed to ensuring:

- a person with a disability who is capable of effective performance in the job or learning to which she/he aspires or which she/he holds is not disadvantaged by reason of having a disability.
- that all reasonable efforts are made to meet the special requirements to which some disabilities give rise, so as to maximise access to employment or learning in WWETB for persons with disabilities and to enable staff with disabilities to make the fullest possible contribution to the work of WWETB.
- WWETB will strive to fulfil the Government objective of achieving a 3% quota for employment of persons with a disability where this can be accomplished with due regard for the exigencies of the service.
- A person with a disability is entitled to apply for any post in WWETB for which she/he is qualified and to have her/his application considered on the basis of her/his abilities, qualifications and suitability for the work in question.
- WWETB is required to ensure that a person selected for appointment is in good health and that her/his disability does not impede her/him carrying out the duties of the post. The selection decision is, therefore, based on objective considerations (normally medical advice).

The following guidelines will apply in relation to recruitment:

- No unnecessary or irrelevant obstacle will be placed in the way of people with disabilities applying for posts in WWETB
- WWETB will make all reasonable efforts to provide facilities and equipment as are necessary to enable applicants with disabilities to compete for posts for which they would otherwise be suited.
- Interview boards will be briefed on disability awareness and employment equality issues
- In supplying information on the duties of posts, care will be taken to avoid specifying inessential requirements which could have the effect of excluding people with disabilities.
- Where WWETB forms an opinion that a candidate is unable, by virtue of a disability, to properly perform the duties of the post, the candidate will be afforded an opportunity to respond to that opinion before a final decision is made.
- Where a person with a disability is appointed, the principal/manager/coordinator of the relevant service should be fully acquainted with the appointee's circumstances and should be involved in discussions regarding any special measures which may be required.
- While it is appreciated that some staff with disabilities may not be able to undertake all the duties of posts in her/his grade, every effort should be made to afford her/him the same opportunities as other staff to broaden her/his experience through staff mobility arrangements.

- Some WWETB buildings were not designed to promote ease of access for people with disabilities but in so far as it has been practicable, WWETB has made significant structural alterations to provide and maintain ease of access for those with disabilities.
- Principals/Managers/Coordinators should adopt a positive approach to reasonable requests for special adaptive equipment which may enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of a staff member with a disability in performing her/his duties where the cost of such request is not disproportionate and/or where grant aid is available.
- Principals/Managers/Coordinators will identify staff members with special needs and with regard to health and safety in her/his area of responsibility, make appropriate arrangements for their evacuation during emergencies.

## Review & Update

This policy will be reviewed and updated annually or more frequently if necessary to ensure any changes to WWETB's organisation structure and business practices are properly reflected in the policy.