Riseladder School of Business and Technology

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy

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Policy Title: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy

Approved By: Senior Leadership Team

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Responsible Officer: Designated Equality Officer

1. Policy Statement

Riseladder School of Business and Technology affirms its unwavering commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion across all areas of its operations. We believe that everyone, regardless of their background, should be treated with dignity and respect. Our institution values the richness that diversity brings to the learning environment and actively works to remove barriers to participation, achievement, and progression.

We are committed to ensuring that no individual is subject to discrimination, harassment, or victimisation on the grounds of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender or gender identity
- Race, ethnicity or nationality
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Marital or civil partnership status
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Socio-economic background

This policy applies to all learners, staff, governors, contractors, partners, and visitors. It underpins all aspects of our work, including recruitment, admissions, teaching, assessment, and organisational culture.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy is to:

a. **Promote fairness and equality of opportunity** – ensuring that every individual has the chance to learn, work and progress without disadvantage.

b. **Comply with legislation and awarding body requirements** – including the **Equality Act 2010**, the **Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR)**, and quality assurance expectations from awarding organisations (e.g., OTHM, Pearson).

c. **Foster an inclusive culture** – where differences are valued, respected, and celebrated as a strength within the school community.

d. **Eliminate discrimination and bias** – by embedding clear processes to challenge unfair treatment, harassment, and victimisation.

e. **Widen participation and remove barriers** – supporting underrepresented groups and ensuring that learners and staff have equitable access to resources, opportunities, and progression routes.

f. **Provide clear guidance** – for learners, staff, and stakeholders on how equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded into all aspects of the school's policies, practices, and decision-making.

3. Scope

This policy applies to **all individuals** who interact with Riseladder School of Business and Technology in any capacity. It covers:

a. **Staff**: including full-time, part-time, visiting lecturers, freelance tutors, contractors, and governors.

b. **Learners**: all applicants, enrolled students, and alumni, regardless of level of study or mode of delivery (online, blended, or in-person).

c. **Recruitment and Admissions**: ensuring fair and transparent processes for both staff and learners.

d. **Teaching, Learning and Assessment**: guaranteeing inclusive learning design, assessment adjustments where required, and equal access to academic support.

e. **Professional Development**: ensuring all staff have equal opportunities to enhance their skills and progress in their careers.

f. **Partnerships and External Engagement**: applying principles of equality and diversity in all collaborations with awarding bodies, universities, employers, and recruitment agents.

g. **Campus and Online Environment**: ensuring that both physical and virtual learning spaces are inclusive, accessible, and safe for all.

h. **Public Interactions**: extending to visitors, service users, suppliers, and any stakeholder who engages with the school.

The scope of this policy also ensures alignment with other core institutional policies such as safeguarding, complaints, reasonable adjustments, and quality assurance.

4. Principles

Riseladder School of Business and Technology's approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is built on the following core principles:

a. **Equal Access**

   Everyone has the right to fair access to learning opportunities, facilities, and resources, regardless of their personal circumstances or background.

b. **Respect and Dignity**

   All individuals will be always treated with courtesy and respect. We foster an environment where discrimination, harassment or bullying is not tolerated.

c. **Diversity as Strength**

   We recognise and celebrate the unique contributions that individuals bring to the school community. Diversity enriches teaching, learning, research, and decision-making.

d. **Fair and Inclusive Assessment**

   All assessments and evaluations will be conducted fairly, without bias. Reasonable adjustments will be provided to ensure that learners with disabilities or additional needs are not disadvantaged.

e. **Zero Tolerance for Discrimination**

   Any behaviour or practice that contravenes this policy including direct or indirect discrimination, harassment, or victimisation, will be challenged and addressed through appropriate procedures.

f. **Accountability and Continuous Improvement**

   Staff, learners, and leaders share responsibility for embedding EDI principles. The school is committed to reviewing policies and practices regularly to ensure they remain effective, relevant, and aligned with evolving legislation and awarding body standards.

5. Responsibilities

To ensure the effectiveness of this policy, responsibilities are shared across the school community:

a. Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

- Provide strategic direction for equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Ensure compliance with legal and awarding body requirements.
- Allocate resources to support inclusive practices and reasonable adjustments.
- Monitor progress and report regularly to the **Quality Assurance Board**.

b. Managers, Programme Leaders, and Tutors

- Embed inclusive teaching, learning, and assessment practices.
- Actively challenge discriminatory behaviour and promote respect within classrooms and online spaces.
- Support learners with specific needs, ensuring adjustments are made where appropriate.
- Signpost staff and learners to relevant policies (e.g., Complaints, Safeguarding, Reasonable Adjustments).

c. Staff (Academic and Administrative)

- Treat colleagues, learners, and visitors with dignity and respect.
- Undertake training in equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Report concerns or breaches of this policy promptly.
- Contribute to a positive and inclusive working environment.

d. Learners

- Treat peers, staff, and visitors with respect.
- Engage positively in an inclusive learning environment.
- Report incidents of discrimination, harassment or victimisation through the appropriate channels.

e. Quality Assurance and Compliance Team

- Monitor the implementation of this policy across all programmes.
- Collect and review learner and staff feedback to evaluate inclusivity.
- Ensure EDI principles are integrated into audits, self-assessment reports, and external quality assurance reviews.

6. Implementation

Riseladder School of Business and Technology will take the following steps to ensure this policy is actively embedded and not just a statement of intent:

a. Training and Awareness

- All staff will receive mandatory training on equality, diversity, inclusion, and unconscious bias.
- Learners will be introduced to the principles of this policy during induction.
- Regular refresher sessions will be provided to keep knowledge up to date.

b. Inclusive Learning and Teaching

- Learning materials and teaching methods will reflect diversity and avoid stereotypes.
- Reasonable adjustments will be provided to ensure learners with disabilities or special educational needs can access the curriculum.
- Assessment methods will be reviewed to ensure fairness and inclusivity.

c. Recruitment and Admissions

- Recruitment processes for both learners and staff will be transparent and non-discriminatory.
- Outreach initiatives will aim to widen participation from underrepresented groups.

d. Monitoring and Data Collection

- Equality data (e.g., learner performance, staff progression) will be collected, monitored and analysed to identify disparities.

- Action plans will be developed to address gaps in participation, achievement, and progression.

e. Accessible Environments

- Online platforms, facilities, and resources will be regularly reviewed to ensure accessibility.
- Adjustments will be made to support learners with specific access requirements, in line with the **Reasonable Adjustments Policy**.

f. Communication and Representation

- Marketing and publicity materials will reflect the diverse nature of our community.
- Equality, diversity and inclusion will be embedded in all official communications.

7. Raising Concerns

Riseladder School of Business and Technology encourages an open culture where learners, staff, and stakeholders feel confident to raise concerns relating to equality, diversity, and inclusion.

a. Reporting Concerns

- Concerns can be raised informally with a tutor, line manager, or designated staff member.
- Formal concerns should be submitted in writing to the **Designated Equality Officer**.
- Anonymous reporting will also be considered where appropriate, though it may limit the ability to investigate fully.

b. Investigation Process

- All concerns will be treated seriously and investigated promptly and impartially.
- Investigations will follow the procedures outlined in the **Complaints Policy** or, where relevant, the **Staff Disciplinary Policy**.

- Individuals raising concerns will be kept informed of progress and outcomes within agreed timelines.

c. Escalation

- If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may escalate the matter to the **Senior Leadership Team**.
- Where internal processes have been exhausted, issues may be referred to the awarding body (e.g., OTHM, Pearson) or, in serious cases, to external regulatory authorities.

d. Protection from Victimisation

- Individuals raising concerns in good faith will be protected from victimisation or retaliation.
- Malicious or false allegations may be treated as misconduct under disciplinary procedures.

8. Monitoring and Review

Riseladder School of Business and Technology is committed to ensuring this Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy remains effective, relevant, and aligned with best practice.

a. Monitoring

- Equality and diversity data will be collected and monitored regularly, covering learner recruitment, retention, achievement, and staff representation.
- Feedback from learners, staff, and external partners will be used to assess how well the policy is working in practice.
- Internal audits and quality assurance reviews will evaluate how equality and inclusion are embedded in teaching, learning, and organisational processes.

b. Review

- This policy will be reviewed **annually** by the **Quality Assurance Board** and updated in line with changes to legislation, awarding body requirements, or institutional needs.
- Significant updates will be approved by the **Senior Leadership Team** and communicated to all staff and learners.

- Interim reviews may be conducted sooner if required (e.g., following new legal guidance or external quality assurance feedback).

c. Continuous Improvement

- Findings from monitoring and review activities will inform the school's **Equality Action Plan**, ensuring continuous improvement.
- Progress will be reported through annual self-assessment reports and shared with awarding bodies during external quality assurance visits.

9. Related Policies

- Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Reasonable Adjustments Policy
- Data Protection/GDPR Policy
- Staff Recruitment and Development Policy
- Malpractice and Plagiarism Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy