

Equal Opportunities and Particular Needs policy

'Respecting diversity and promoting equal opportunities'

News Associates aims to provide journalism training for students, whatever their background. In pursuit of this aim, we accept our responsibilities under human rights and anti-discrimination legislation.

In promoting equal opportunities, the company will develop effective measures for ensuring that all groups and individuals are able to work and study in an environment which is free from discrimination and harassment on the grounds of gender, race, ethnicity, colour, nationality, disability, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family responsibility, trade union activity, religious or political belief.

As well as implementing policies and practices which promote equality, News Associates will actively pursue policies for widening access and enhancing staff and student diversity, with regular monitoring of progress.

All students and employees are required to comply with this policy and to promote a culture which values diversity and equality of opportunity in all areas.

1. Student Admissions

1.1 Recruitment literature will include a statement of the Equal Opportunities Policy for Students. All recruitment literature will use non-discriminatory language and will encourage applications from groups under-represented in higher education.

1.2 Decisions on admissions are based solely on the individual merits of each candidate and their suitability for the course (with due regard to the entry requirements laid down by the NCTJ). They will be assessed by the application of selection criteria appropriate to the course of study. Admissions procedures are kept under regular review to ensure compliance with this policy.

Applications from students with disabilities are considered on exactly the same academic grounds as those from other candidates. We are committed to making arrangements whenever practicable to enable such students to participate as fully as possible in student life. In order to widen access to journalism, the company will encourage applicants from groups that are currently under-represented through its marketing and open days.

1.3 As a matter of principle, the company will not discriminate against applicants on any of the following grounds:

- age*
- disability
- family responsibilities
- gender

- HIV status
- marital status
- mental health problems

- nationality
- race
- religious or political views or affiliations
- sexual orientation
- socio-economic background
- gender identity

* We define A Levels (or equivalent) as the minimum requirement for admission, which would mean a minimum age of 18. There is no upper age limit for admission.

1.4 Staff dealing with admissions will be aware of and conform to the company's Equal Opportunities Policy relating to students.

1.5 The company will put in place arrangements to allow the monitoring of applications and admissions by ethnic origin, gender, age and disability and make them available to our external assessors. If there is any indication that members of one group have received less favourable treatment than members of another group, the situation will be investigated and appropriate action taken. The company will monitor those students who temporarily or permanently withdraw from their degree schemes to see if there are implications for a policy of responsible recruitment.

1.6 The company recognises the need to strike a balance between the work of selectors who exercise academic judgement on the merits of applicants for places and the need to ensure that the Equal Opportunities Policy for Students is fully met. If a candidate complains that his or her application has not been treated in accordance with the policy, then the complaint will be referred to the Head of Journalism Training and, if necessary, to the NCTJ.

2. Assessment

2.1 The company's objective is to provide a fair method of assessment for equality of opportunity to all of its students.

2.2 Special arrangements will be made available to students with known disabilities, to compensate for the restrictions imposed by the disability without affecting the validity of examinations and assessments.

2.3 A copy of the company's Equal Opportunities Policy for Students will be lodged with the NCTJ, so that all external examiners to act in accordance with this policy.

3. Curriculum

3.1 The company recognises the importance of the development of the individual through the educational process and the role of the curriculum in ensuring that this development is fulfilled.

3.2 The company is therefore committed to the promotion of equal opportunity with respect to course content, approaches to teaching and learning, assessment methods and the structure and timetabling of courses of study. Further, it will aim to ensure that documents such as teaching materials and examination papers reflect the principles of equal opportunities.

3.3 The company will aim to provide a programme of courses which are of relevance and interest to persons of both sexes and from a wide range of social and cultural backgrounds and which are as accessible as possible to people with disabilities, as far as resources permit.

3.4 The company will encourage perspectives which reflect the cultural diversity of our society and which are neither gender dominated nor ethnocentric.

3.5 The company will encourage and appraise, from an equal opportunities point of view, through the process of validation and monitoring, the use of a range of teaching approaches as well as assessment methods and will be sensitive to the special needs of under-represented groups in teaching and learning situations.

4. Teaching

4.1 All staff and students will use language which is non-discriminatory and is not gratuitously chosen in order to cause offence to particular groups, in the course of teaching and learning. However, it is a fundamental principle of academic freedom that reasoned argument may be employed to test and challenge views, opinions and assertions of all kinds, and in no circumstances may this clause be used to discourage or prevent the exercise of that freedom.

4.2 The company will take account of the needs of individual students and, wherever reasonably practicable within existing constraints, consideration will be given to issues such as caring for dependants, when lectures and examinations are timetabled.

5. Services and Facilities

The company is committed to the principle of equal access by all of its students in groups or as individuals to the services it provides and the facilities it offers.

6. Health and Safety

6.1 The company aims to provide its staff and trainees with a healthy and safe environment in which to work. It is the duty of all trainees to comply with the

relevant requirements. The enforcement of reasonable health and safety requirements does not constitute discrimination.

6.2 The company will make every effort to ensure that, so far as reasonably practicable, all relevant parts of the building are accessible and safe. The needs of people with disabilities will be given particular consideration.

7. Disciplinary Procedures

These will be kept under review to ensure that they are consistent with the company's Equal Opportunities Policy for Students.

8. Training

All staff normally having contact with students will receive a copy of this Policy and Code of Practice.

9. Harassment and Bullying

The company wishes to encourage a culture where harassment and bullying are unable to thrive. Incidents of harassment and bullying are regarded extremely seriously and may be grounds for disciplinary action including dismissal or expulsion.

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