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## **GBS Equal Opportunities Policy**

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<b>Related policies</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GBS Student Complaints Policy and Procedure</li> <li>▪ GBS Student Charter</li> <li>▪ GBS Student Code of Conduct</li> <li>▪ GBS Equality and Diversity Policy</li> <li>▪ GBS Extenuating Circumstances Policy and Procedure</li> <li>▪ GBS Good Academic Practice and Academic Malpractice Policy.</li> <li>▪ GBS Anti-Harassment and Anti-Bullying Policy</li> </ul>
<b>External Reference</b>
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## **GBS HE Malta Limited Equal Opportunities Policy**

### **1. Equal Opportunities Policy Statement**

- 1.1. GBS HE Malta Limited is committed to promoting equality and diversity in all our practices and aims to establish an inclusive culture free from discrimination and based upon the values of dignity, courtesy, and respect. GBS aims to support and develop its staff by providing all with access to facilities, personal and career development opportunities together with a positive and encouraging teaching and learning environment for both students and staff.
- 1.2. This policy applies to all students, prospective students, to all staff employed on a full time or part-time basis, to all staff on permanent or temporary contracts, agency staff, honorary title/contract holders and visitors undertaking duties in the name of GBS and to sub-contractors undertaking work on any of GBS' campuses, and all visitors to the GBS.

### **2. GBS Vision, Mission and Strategic Plan**

- 2.1. GBS HE Malta Limited is committed to ensuring that an environment is created that respects the diversity of staff and students and enables them to achieve their full potential. Our Strategic Plan 2021-24 provides the following guiding Vision, Mission statement and core values for GBS.

#### **2.2. Vision**

- 2.2.1. Changing lives through education that makes a fundamental difference to living standards and access to learning.

#### **2.3. Mission**

- 2.3.1. The mission of GBS is to facilitate the development of applied skills in all our courses through to the quality of our teaching, and the application of evidence-based research and corporate case studies to this teaching.

#### **2.4. Core Values**

- 2.4.1. GBS HE Malta Limited will work to ensure that all staff and students working for the School are aware of our commitment to equality and diversity.
- (ii) Focusing on learners and learning
  - (iii) Striving for excellence in learner achievement
  - (iv) Supporting widening participation for students living in traditionally low areas of higher education participation
  - (v) Ensuring high aspirations and learner achievement
  - (vi) Having committed and qualified staff
  - (vii) Creating a dynamic and welcoming environment
  - (viii) Working in effective teams and partnerships
  - (ix) Developing and enhancing our strategic capability to ensure the

long-term success of GBS to achieve our vision.

### **3. Policy Objectives**

3.1. To achieve these objectives the following basic rights for all existing and prospective staff and students are acknowledged:

- (a) To be treated with respect and dignity
- (b) To be treated fairly regarding all policies, procedures, assessments, and related activities
- (c) To be encouraged to reach their full potential.

3.2. Due regard will be given to:

- (a) Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation
- (b) Advancing equality of opportunity across all the activities of GBS
- (c) Fostering good relations between people of a diverse background.
- (d) Work to prevent all forms of unlawful discrimination, including antisemitism.
- (e) Deal with all forms of discrimination consistently and effectively
- (f) Ensure that the Equal Opportunities Policy influences and informs the culture of GBS.

### **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

4.1. It is the responsibility of all members of GBS HE Malta Limited community to behave with dignity, courtesy, and respect, and to act in a manner that does not unlawfully discriminate.

#### **4.2. Role of GBS Senior Management Team**

4.3. GBS Senior Management Team have the following responsibilities with respect to adherence to this Equal Opportunities Policy:

- To ensure that all staff receive appropriate equal opportunities training.
- To investigate all aspects of alleged discrimination, harassment, and inappropriate behaviour promptly and thoroughly.
- To ensure that selection and appointment procedures, performance management processes, staff development opportunities, and disciplinary and grievance processes are fairly and consistently applied to all staff.
- To treat all staff applications for flexible working practices on a fair and equitable basis, and to provide reasonable and objective reasons when such requests are refused.
- To ensure that student selection and admissions procedures, assessment processes,

career development opportunities and disciplinary and complaints procedures are fairly and consistently applied to all students.

- To provide leadership in the implementation, operation and understanding of this policy.
- To be accountable for any issues concerned with failure to adhere to this policy.

#### **4.4. Role of GBS Staff and Students**

4.4.1. GBS staff and students have the following responsibilities with respect to adherence to this Equal Opportunities Policy:

- To actively encourage non-discriminatory practices and to report any incidences of behaviour that fail to comply with this policy.
- To be aware of and support the objectives and aims of this policy.
- To undertake appropriate equality and diversity training.

### **5. Application of GBS Equal Opportunities Policy: Staff**

#### **5.1. Recruitment and Selection**

5.1.1. Recruitment advertising will encourage applications from all sectors of the community reflecting GBS HE Malta Limited commitment to equality and diversity. Recruitment advertising will appear in publications appropriate to the audience capable of producing the best candidates (subject to budget considerations).

5.1.2. Job descriptions, person specifications and recruitment advertisements will be written based on the essential and justifiable requirements of the position. Shortlisting, appointment, and rejection decisions will be transparent and justifiable.

#### **5.2. Grading and Promotion**

5.2.1. All grading and promotions criteria and procedures will be free from prejudice and must be applied equitably and consistently.

#### **5.3. Staff Development**

5.3.1. All staff will have equal access to induction, personal and career development opportunities, and facilities.

#### **5.4. Performance Management**

5.4.1. Probation and appraisal procedures will be clear and transparent and will be applied fairly across all staff.

#### **5.5. Discipline and Grievance**

- 5.5.1. Disciplinary and grievance procedures will be applied fairly and transparently for all staff. Allegations of discrimination, harassment or inappropriate behaviour will be dealt with under the appropriate disciplinary procedures for staff.

## **6. Application of GBS Equal Opportunities Policy: Students**

### **6.1. Recruitment, Selection and Admission**

- 6.1.1. All information contained in prospectuses, websites and other material used in the recruitment of students will promote equality of opportunity and refer to this policy. All staff involved in the recruitment, selection and admission of students will have an awareness of equality and diversity.

### **6.2. Assessment**

- 6.2.1. There will be clear, consistent, and transparent criteria for student assessments and all assessments will take place on an equal opportunities' basis.

### **6.3. Career Planning and Participation**

- 6.3.1. All students will have access to career planning support and will be encouraged to participate fully in the academic, cultural, and social life of GBS.

### **6.4. Discipline and Student Complaints**

- 6.4.1. Discipline and student complaints policies and procedures will be applied fairly and transparently for all students. Allegations of harassment or discrimination will be dealt with under the Student Charter.

## **7. Visitors, Contractors and Sub-Contractors**

- 7.1. Visitors, contractors, and sub-contractors must comply with GBS Equal Opportunities Policy. School staff meeting/employing visitors, contractors and sub-contractors are responsible for making them aware of this policy.

## **8. Training**

- 8.1. Equality and diversity awareness raising, and training will be mandatory for all staff. Information will be provided to all to raise awareness of equality and diversity and the contents of this policy during induction training.
- 8.2. Students will be briefed about GBS Equal Opportunities Policy during induction at the start of their studies and at least once a year thereafter. Any changes to the Equal Opportunities Policy will be communicated to students through the School's virtual learning environment.

## **9. Communication**

- 9.1. The Equal Opportunities Policy will be made available to staff, students, prospective students, and the public more generally via GBS HE Malta website. This policy and

related information, including web-links, will be made available for students and staff on the virtual learning environment.

## **10. Breach**

10.1. Contravention or breach of the Equal Opportunities Policy will be treated as a disciplinary matter and will be dealt with under the staff or student disciplinary policies, as appropriate.

## **11. Legislation**

11.1. GBS is operating in Malta and therefore can only pursue fair treatment within the boundaries of its operation. GBS values diversity and recognises that a variety of backgrounds, experiences, views, beliefs, and cultures are represented within its staff and student groups. In exercising its policies, practices, and procedures, GBS is devoted to eliminating discrimination and advancing equality.

## **12. The General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR)**

12.1. The EU General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR) regulate the sharing, use and reuse of data. All GBS HE Malta members (staff and students) are collectively responsible for monitoring the data available for each of the protected characteristics and taking appropriate action to advance equality and diversity.

12.2. GBS Senior staff must monitor student enrolment, retention, achievement, and success at appropriate points throughout the academic year. They must evaluative reports, such as the Annual Quality Assurance Report, Programme Performance Reports (PPRs) and Annual Programme Monitoring Report, present and evaluate student data. Where there are differences in the data for different groups of students, actions should be identified to help reduce and eliminate unwarranted differences.

12.3. GBS HE Malta Academic Board, Learning and Teaching Committee, Learning Resources Committee and Programme Committees are responsible for monitoring equality and diversity data relating to students and the Executive Management Board is responsible for monitoring equality and diversity data for staff.

## **13. Monitoring and Review**

13.1. This policy may be amended by GBS at any time.

## **14. Alternative Format**

14.1. This policy can be provided in alternative formats (including large print, audio and electronic) upon request. For further information, or to make a request, please contact:

- **Name:** Student Welfare Management Team
- **Position:** Student Welfare Officer/Manager

## Annex 1: Glossary

**Data:** A collection of organised or unorganised information, facts, concepts, instructions, observations, or measurements, in the form of numbers, letters, symbols, images, or any other form, that are collected, produced, or processed by Data Providers.

**Age** A protected characteristic. A person belonging to a particular age (for example, 65-year-olds) or a range of ages (for example 50 to 60 years of age).

**Disability** A protected characteristic. A person has a disability if she or he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial long term and adverse effect of the person's ability to carry out normal everyday activities. Long term means that the disability has lasted or is likely to last for at least twelve months. Substantial means more than minor or trivial.

**Diversity** is concerned with acknowledging, respecting and valuing differences between individuals and groups of people.

**Equality** is about ensuring that people are treated fairly and given equal opportunities. Equality is not about treating everyone in the same way. Equality is about ensuring that different individuals and groups have their needs met in appropriate ways. Equality offers a framework that enables opportunity, access, participation, and contribution that is fair and inclusive.

**Equality Impact Assessment** Is a process whereby a policy, procedure or practice is reviewed, and if necessary amended, to ensure that it does not discriminate against any person or group of people with a protected characteristic.

**Harassment** Is where a person or group of people behave in such a way that their conduct has the purpose or effect of creating an environment that is hostile, degrading, humiliating or intimidating.

**Race** A protected characteristic. Race refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, nationality (including citizenship) and ethnic or national origins.

**Reasonable Adjustment** The duty to make reasonable adjustment is made up of three requirements. For providers of education these requirements are to take reasonable steps to:

- (i) Avoid the substantial disadvantage where a provision, criterion or practice puts disabled students at a substantial disadvantage compared to students who are not disabled.
- (ii) Remove or alter a physical feature or provide a reasonable means of avoiding such a feature where it puts disabled students at a substantial disadvantage compared to students who are not disabled.
- (iii) Provide an auxiliary aid where disabled students would, but for the provision of such an auxiliary aid, be put at a substantial disadvantage compared to students who are not disabled.