

Equality & Diversity Policy

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 Millennium Performing Arts is opposed to any policy or practice which discriminates against an individual or group on grounds of sex, colour, creed, ethnic/national origins, sexual orientation, class, age, disability, marital status and those caring for dependants. We recognise that people who have been categorised in this way have suffered a long history of oppression and in particular, have experienced substantial discrimination within the sphere of employment.
- 1.1.2 In our admissions and application practices we will strive to eradicate such discrimination and will apply objective criteria to assess relevant abilities, avoiding judgments based on personal preference and prejudice. We aim to ensure that all applicants are considered on an equal basis, with equal opportunities to training and progression.
- 1.1.3 The very foundation of MPA guarantees an open and progressive approach towards equal opportunities. We are committed to equal opportunities and take complaints about discrimination seriously. We believe that all students and staff have the right to be treated with respect and dignity in an atmosphere free from threat or abuse. At MPA we promote positive attitudes to equality in treatment of all MPA students and staff. We aim to ensure that learners/ staff are truly representative of all sections of society and that every learner/staff member feels respected and able to give their best.

1.2 Definitions

1.2.1 It should be noted that MPA has adopted the following definitions:

- Diversity means recognising, valuing and taking account of people's different backgrounds, knowledge, skills and experiences, and encouraging and using those differences to make the way we work and learn more creative, efficient and innovative.
- Direct discrimination is treating a person less favourably than others due to their age, colour, creed, disability, marital status, race, religion, sexuality, social status etc.
- Indirect discrimination is the applying of a requirement or condition, which, although applied equally to everyone, is such that a considerably smaller proportion of a particular group can comply with it and it cannot be justified.
- Harassment is described as inappropriate actions, behaviour, comments or physical contact that is objectionable or causes offence to the recipient. It may be directed towards people because of their gender, appearance, race, colour, ethnic origin, nationality, age, sexual preference, a disability or some other characteristic. Bullying is included in this category. Victimisation is defined as when someone is treated less favourably than others because he or she has taken action against MPA or provided information about discrimination, harassment or inappropriate behaviour.
- MPA regards discrimination, harassment or victimisation as serious misconduct and any employee or student who discriminates against, harasses or victimises any other person will be liable to appropriate disciplinary action. Where anyone working for or studying with, MPA feels that they are being harassed the details should be reported to the Directors.

1.3 Operational Guidance

1.3.1 MPA strives to provide equality of treatment for all and will:

- Ensure no learner/staff member is discriminated against or receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, gender re-assignment, age, marital status, race, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, disability, sexual orientation, religion or social status
- Promote acceptance of cultural and social diversity
- Challenge inequality and provide non-discriminatory access to our services and activities
- Utilise verbal and non-verbal communication that meets the principles of inclusion
- Employ and promote staff on the basis of skills, qualifications, experience, aptitude and abilities
- Distribute publicity materials which are free from stereotypes and discriminatory assumptions, images and language
- Ensure that every learner can learn in an environment that promotes dignity and respect to all
- Ensure that no form of intimidation, bullying or harassment is tolerated
- Ensure that practices and procedures are reviewed and amended to ensure fairness, with any breaches to this policy being dealt with appropriately
- Provide advice and guidance to staff and learners to ensure that equality of opportunity is demonstrated
- Ensure awareness is raised around issues of diversity
- Acknowledge any issues of discrimination that are brought to the attention of management ensuring they are investigated and rectified promptly and sensitively using an appropriate procedure.

1.3.2 The effectiveness of this policy relies on all staff and students of MPA, being vigilant and reporting any instances where the policy is violated.

1.4 Reporting Procedure - The procedure for this is detailed below:

- Learners/Staff who are aware of discrimination of any kind, or consider that they are being discriminated against, should in the first instance consider whether it may be appropriate to raise the issue informally with the alleged discriminator, who may not be aware that their behaviour is causing offence.
- Where it is not appropriate for an approach to be made to the alleged discriminator, or the learner/staff member is unwilling to do this, they should consider to whom they should highlight their issue. In most cases it is envisaged this would be their HOD or HOY; alternatively this maybe the Senior Management Team or the Directors.
- The Staff member with whom the matter is raised should either investigate the concerns or refer the matter, wherever possible with the agreement of the person concerned, to a more appropriate staff member (Directors or Head of Academic Quality & Curriculum)
- Once the matter has been investigated the learner/staff member who has alleged discrimination should be informed of the action taken and, where appropriate, the outcome. It may not be appropriate to give details of any disciplinary sanctions applied
- Where learners/staff are not happy about the action taken they should appeal, within seven working days, to the Head of Academic Quality & Curriculum who should review or appoint an appropriate member of staff to review their concerns
- Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against any employee, teacher, volunteer or learner who violates the MPA Equality & Diversity Policy. Any student or staff member may raise a grievance with no penalty for doing so, unless it is untrue and not made in good faith.

- 1.5 **Awareness and Commitment** - MPA ensure all staff and students are aware of the importance of our Equality and Diversity Policy at each course induction and through regular staff training days. Our Complaints Policy and Appeals Procedures also provides a structure for supporting all students and staff equally, including any reports of non-approved barriers to access of opportunity and equality of assessment.

- 1.6 MPA records information about the ethnic background, age, sex, religion, sexual orientation and disability of everyone who makes a complaint so that we promote and maintain our equal opportunities commitment. We will keep all information confidential. We welcome comments and suggestions that can help us improve our policy and procedure. The feedback we obtain will help us to continue to improve our policy/procedure.