



Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy

Louth and Meath Education and Training Board

February 2025

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to set out the commitment of Louth and Meath Education and Training Board (LMETB) to promote equality, diversity, and an inclusive culture, across all sectors of the organisation.

LMETB in accordance with Irish Human Rights and Equality Act 2014, and other equality legislative obligations, will endeavor to eliminate discrimination, maintaining an environment of dignity and respect where all staff members, learners, and service users can fully participate in services without fear of discrimination, harassment or acts of bullying due to a person's Age, Civil Status, Disability, Family Status, Gender, Membership of the Traveller Community, Race, Religion, or Sexual Orientation. These categories are known as the nine specified grounds of equality in legislation.

This policy will set out the means of identifying and removing discrimination, whilst actively promoting equality and diversity across the organisation. Staff members are obliged to familiarise themselves with the content of this policy and promote good practice in their LMETB Workplaces and learning environments.

2. Legislative Obligations

In creating this policy, LMETB refers to the legislative obligations assigned to Public Bodies in the following Acts:

The Employment Equality Acts (amended) 1998 to 2015
The Equal Status Acts (amended) 2000- 2018
The Disability Act 2005 (amended)
The Irish Human Rights and Equality Act 2014

3. Scope and application

This policy applies to the Board of LMETB, its committees, applicants for employment, all employees in their performance of duties for LMETB regardless of contract status and interview board members.

For the purposes of this policy, service users can be defined as visitors, members of the public, clients, service providers of internal and external third-party services and those engaged in and associated with the many activities of across the ETB.

4. Statement of Commitment

LMETB has set out in full its commitment to the promotion of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in its document – [LMETB Equality and Human Rights Statement](#)

In short, LMETB will:

- ☑ commit to a nondiscriminatory (direct or indirect) environment where access to, and participation in, employment across the nine specified equality grounds is fully inclusive
- ☑ take all necessary measures to ensure provision of services, internal and external, are provided to all persons free from harassment and discrimination.
- ☑ ensure staff members are aware of their obligations to provide an inclusive and supportive environment for colleagues, learners, and service users.
- ☑ have a zero-tolerance approach to blatant discriminatory behaviour and hate speech, enforcing disciplinary action on failure to comply.
- ☑ identify barriers as part of the Public Service Duty Assess, Address and Report process and act on these to maximise the potential of processes and eliminate imbalances where reasonably possible.
- ☑ is committed to providing integrated and accessible services and information to all users by ensuring reasonable accommodation is provided when necessary and will seek to ensure all content published via internal and external platforms is in accessible format.
- ☑ remains an inclusive employer, actively encouraging the recruitment and retention of staff with disabilities.

5. Related policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with related policies on the LMETB website in the policy and procedure page.

6. LMETB as employer

LMETB is committed to the principles of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in its employment practices. The points below outline LMETB's promotion of equality across all areas of employment practice including recruitment and selection,

training and development, progression, pay, employment conditions and retention.

7. Advertising of vacancies

LMETB is an equal opportunities employer, and this is reflected in our advertising by striving to make job advertisements and descriptions accessible in all formats, exempt of unnecessary job requirements that would unfairly exclude potential applicants. Our recruitment staff is on hand to assist any candidate who may require assistance with the application process via recruitment@lmetb.ie and alternatively, our Access Officer is available via accessofficer@lmetb.ie

Job advertisements will clearly state LMETB as an equal opportunities employer and Job descriptions will clearly state the mandatory, essential, and desirable requirements for each position, with the skills, knowledge, experience, and competencies for each position clearly outlined.

8. Recruitment and selection process

LMETB will ensure that application processes are open to all eligible candidates and will actively seek to prevent discrimination directly or indirectly against any applicant based on the nine equality grounds.

LMETB will seek to remove any identified barriers to employment for eligible candidates and select candidates based on merit with competencies and skills most suited to the advertised post.

LMETB welcomes diversity and will provide reasonable accommodation to applicants with disabilities throughout the selection, interview, and employment process.

9. Interview process

LMETB provides Competency Based Interview and Disability Awareness training for members of interview panels. The competency-based training module covers areas of equality and discrimination. Training on Equality grounds and Disability Awareness will be made available to all staff across our ETB as part of our Public Sector Duty process.

LMETB welcomes the disclosure of disabilities at any stage of the recruitment process and will provide the required accommodations supports to candidates/employees. Should a candidate disclose a disability on application,

supports will be made available for the interview process.

Role specific standardised shortlisting and marking schemes are in operation for rating candidates on the basis of experience, skills, qualifications (where necessary) and other specified competencies.

10. Career Progression of staff members

LMETB will strive to ensure that equal access to career progression and promotional opportunities is open and inclusive by identifying barriers to progression for staff with reference to the nine specified equality grounds and where necessary and reasonable, implement measures to address imbalances.

11. Retention of staff members

LMETB will make every effort to retain employees where the development of a disability has seriously impacted the working life of the employee. LMETB will offer the services of the Employee Assistance Programme and work with recommendations from LMETB's Occupational Health Service providers, or such other specialists as LMETB might retain from time to time, to actively support an employee in the work life balance process.

12. Communications

LMETB will make every effort to ensure that materials produced, circulated, and published are done so in a manner accessible to staff, learners and service users. LMETB regularly review all online and social media formats in an effort to make our platforms more accessible to all.

Direct contact with colleagues, staff members, learners, and service users shall at all times – verbally and in written form - be non-discriminatory, courteous and professional, fully conducive to an environment of dignity and respect as outlined in LMETB's Dignity at Work policy. Discrimination in any form, on the basis of the nine equality grounds, will not be tolerated and may be subject to disciplinary measures.

13. Contractors

As LMETB strives to provide an equal and inclusive work, learning and business environment for all, it expects similar principles to be upheld by contractors associated with our ETB. We fully expect contractors and companies to comply

with the principles outlined in this policy when providing services for LMETB. Any breach of the principles of equality, particularly across the nine specified grounds, may constitute grounds for suspension or cancellation of services and/or contract.

14. Complaints procedure

LMETB fully welcomes the opportunity to address any forms of discrimination and will do so under the policies in place including the dignity at work policy, the LMETB customer complaints procedures and any relevant equality Act. In the first instance a staff member who wishes to report a concern in relation to discrimination in a working, learning or service environment should do so via email to accessofficer@lmetb.ie or via telephone number 086 128 3301.

15. Policy Review

This policy was fully revised in February 2025 for presentation to the LMETB Board and circulation to all staff members.

This Policy does not alter or amend employees' contracts of employment or form a part of any such contract of employment. LMETB may amend or change this policy.

Appendix 1 – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion explained

Discrimination in a general context means treating one person in a less favourable manner than another person based on a specific ground or reason. There are **9 grounds for discrimination** known as the *protected or specific grounds* recognised by Irish legislation. These grounds are defined as follows:

- **Gender:** includes man, woman or transgender

- **Civil status:** single, married, separated, divorced, widowed people, civil partner, former civil partner

- **Family status:** pregnant, parent of a person under 18 years or the resident primary carer or parent of a person with a disability

- **Sexual orientation:** gay, lesbian, bisexual and heterosexual

- **Religion:** means religious belief, background, outlook or none

- **Age:** this does not apply to a person aged under 16

- **Disability:** includes people with physical, intellectual, learning, cognitive or emotional disabilities and a range of medical conditions

- **Race:** includes race, skin colour, nationality or ethnic origin

- Membership of the **Traveller community**

Discrimination can be in direct form, indirect, by association or imputation.

Direct Discrimination

This can be defined as the treatment of a person in a less favourable way than another person is, has or would be treated in a comparable situation on any of the nine equality grounds.

Indirect Discrimination

This happens when there is less favourable treatment in effect or by impact to more than one person. For example, if the practice of an employer puts people who are considered in one of the nine grounds at a particular disadvantage, then the employer is deemed to have indirectly discriminated against those persons and will have to objectively justify the reasons for doing so as appropriate or necessary under employment legislation

Discrimination by association

Discrimination by association happens when a person is treated less favourably simply because they are associated with or connected to another person who comes under the nine grounds.

Discrimination by imputation

This is discrimination against a person because they are incorrectly assumed (imputed) to be a member of one of the protected groups.

Bias and Unconscious Bias

Unconscious bias refers to the subtle, often unintentional stereotypes and prejudices that can influence our decisions and actions without our conscious awareness. These biases can shape our perceptions of factors such as gender, race, age, and more, and can impacting the way we interact in the workplace.