



Diversity, Equality and Inclusion

Promoting and supporting diversity and inclusion in the workplace is an important aspect of good people management. Diversity and inclusion is about ensuring everyone is valued as an individual.

The terms diversity, equality and inclusion are often used interchangeably. Equality usually refers to the ensuring that individuals are not treated less favourably due to particular characteristics, such as gender, race and disability. Inclusion focuses on recognising, respecting and valuing difference.

To be competitive, organisations need everyone to be able to make their best contribution. Considering diversity and inclusion helps organisations to develop a culture in which everyone can thrive, feels valued and have their contribution recognised. Diversity and inclusion is important in attracting and retaining talent, supports staff wellbeing and engagement, enhances corporate reputation and innovation and helps organisations to meet the needs of a diverse customer base and be market competitive (CIPD).

Under the law (the Equality Act 2010), everyone has the right to work free of discrimination, harassment and bullying. The law however sets only a minimum standard; effective diversity and inclusion strategies and practices will often go way beyond what is required legally.

Although the responsibility for policies and practices relating to equality, diversity and inclusion often resides within the Human Resources function, diversity and inclusion is an organisation wide issue and to be truly effective must be embedded in everything the organisation does, and part of its strategy. Every member of staff has a responsibility to uphold equality and inclusion in the workplace.

Key Aspects to Diversity and Inclusion at Work

- Decisions relating to people at work, such as recruitment, promotion, reward and recognition, and the provision of learning and development, should be made on merit only.
- Training is key to raising awareness of diversity issues, as well as helping staff to recognise their own potential for unconscious bias.
- Organisations need to have effective policies and procedures relating to equality and inclusion, including how issues and complaints will be dealt with. These policies set out required standards of behaviour.
- Equality metrics are used by most organisations to identify progress against objectives and to identify areas of concern that need to be addressed.
- Many organisations take steps to address inequalities within their workforce. This can include networking groups, campaigns or targeted learning and development. In the HE sector this includes Athena Swan.

The Role of the Manager

Good people management practice will include diversity and inclusion throughout. It is not about treating every member of staff the same, but treating people fairly and consistently and taking into account their individual needs.

Managers can promote diversity and inclusion in everything that they do; they should ensure that they are aware of their own potential unconscious biases by undertaking training. They will often be responsible for decisions around recruitment, reward, promotion and learning, and can ensure that these are taken on the basis of merit only. They can also role model with their own behaviour, and ensure that any inappropriate behaviour or language within their own teams is addressed promptly.