



## **Ecctis policy**

# **Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion**





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## EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

### 1.0 ECCTIS POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 Ecctis is committed to encouraging equality, diversity, and inclusion among our workforce, and eliminating unlawful discrimination. The individuals who represent different cultures, experiences, and skillsets are at the core of how Ecctis delivers our services. Ecctis seeks to foster a working environment in which all employees are treated as individuals in a fair and consistent way, ensuring compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and promoting a culture of respect and dignity.

Ecctis works closely with many external parties such as our customers and clients, contractors, consultants, as well as our suppliers. Ecctis expects the same principles that we strive towards regarding our dealings with each other internally to be applied to our external contacts and will not tolerate the poor treatment of our employees or organisation in relation to the principles laid out in this policy.

Ecctis takes pride in our 'Ecctis Voice', we strive to provide independent guidance and evaluation based on established methodologies and criteria. Ecctis ensures that our voice is clear, assured, understanding, objective, and informed in all ways in which we communicate both internally and externally. This voice underpins our work and ensures that any potential positive or negative bias when evaluating qualifications is minimised, ensuring fair and consistent treatment of all applicants and customers.

This policy, which is linked to our company values, covers our dealings with our colleagues, clients, customers, consultants, and suppliers as well as their dealings with us.

### 2.0 SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy applies to all Ecctis employees as well as all affiliated consultants, contractors, suppliers, clients, and customers.

### 3.0 ECCTIS VALUES

- 3.1 Ecctis has five core values:

- **Respectful** – We value differences, treat everyone with respect, and build trust by fostering a fair and inclusive culture.
- **Ambitious** – We are ambitious and enthusiastic in our approach to finding solutions.
- **Creative** – We encourage a balance of bold, creative, and

innovative thinking, built on our experience and learnings.

- **Dynamic** – We evolve in our dynamic industry by using our expertise to create opportunities and champion continuous improvement.
- **Engaging** – We grow by engaging professionally and responsibly with each other, by being receptive to feedback, and making space for new ideas.

3.2 These values drive our organisational culture and how we make key decisions, as well as how we interact with our colleagues and external contacts. These values underpin how we evolve and implement our Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy and how we endeavour to champion in favour of diversity and inclusion in our organisation.

## 4.0 LEGISLATION

4.1 The primary law which drives our approach is the Equality Act 2010, which is a compilation of many previous pieces of legislation regarding discrimination, introducing the following protected characteristics, in which Ecctis is dedicated to not discriminating on the basis of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin)
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation.

## 5.0 TYPES OF DISCRIMINATION

Ecctis is committed to ensuring that all types of discrimination under the Equality Act 2010 are combatted. The types of discrimination are listed below:

### 5.1 Direct discrimination

This type of discrimination can take form in three different ways, and involves a person being treated less favourably because of:

- A protected characteristic they possess. This is ordinary direct discrimination.
- A protected characteristic possessed by someone they are associated with (a family member or colleague). This is direct discrimination by association.

- A protected characteristic they are thought to possess, regardless of if this assumption is true or not. This is direct discrimination by perception.

## **5.2 Indirect discrimination**

This type of discrimination is less obvious than direct, and normally discrimination is not the intention, typically this type of discrimination can occur when a rule or policy is put in place that applies to everyone, which might not be discriminatory in itself, but could disadvantage someone with a protected characteristic.

## **5.3 Harassment**

Harassment is unwelcomed conduct related to a person's protected characteristic. This type of discrimination has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, or offensive environment for them. Bullying, nicknames, gossip, inappropriate questions fall into this category.

## **5.4 Victimisation**

Victimisation is when an employee is put at a disservice because they have done (or it is suspected they have done) one of the following in good faith:

- Making an allegation of discrimination
- Support a complaint of discrimination
- Give evidence relating to a complaint about discrimination
- Raise a grievance concerning equality or discrimination
- Do anything else in connection with the Equality Act – for example bringing an employment tribunal claim in relation to discrimination.

## **6.0 ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT**

Ecctis is committed to the fostering of an equal, diverse, and inclusive culture with the following on a wide-picture scope:

- 6.1 Encouraging equality, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace in line with best practice.
- 6.2 Creating a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation, and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all employees are recognised and valued.

All employees should understand that they, as well as their employer can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation, and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, customers, clients, suppliers, and the public.

- 6.3 Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation, and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, customers, clients, suppliers, and visitors. Such acts to be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation's disciplinary and/or grievance policies and procedures and appropriate action taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.
- 6.4 Making opportunities for training, development, and progress available to all employees, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

Ecctis is committed to the fostering of an equal, diverse, and inclusive culture with the following in key focused areas such as:

### **6.5 Recruitment and Selection**

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion does not just pertain to existing employees, Ecctis is committed to ensuring equality within our recruitment and selection processes, helping us enable the introduction of employees from all different races, backgrounds, and points of view.

Our advertisement process, both internally and externally across all media platforms (social media, job adverts, etc) must not indicate or imply to indicate any intention to discriminate anyone unfairly on the grounds which were previously defined in this policy.

Ecctis strives to advertise all adverts to a wide platform and uses inclusive language so as to not dissuade or unjustifiably exclude the number of applicants based on any of the protected characteristics discussed within this policy. Ecctis advertises all vacancies with wording to encourage applicants from diverse or marginalised backgrounds to apply to encourage a more diverse applicant pool.

All methods of selection such as interviews and assessments are given equally across any applications for the same position, and any reasonable adjustments are always offered to enable people from all backgrounds to partake. For full transparency, Ecctis scores all interviews and relevant tests, and keeps records according to GDPR legislation to ensure no discrimination has taken place during the recruitment and selection process. All managers are trained through a line management training and induction course delivered by Ecctis Human Resources, which enables them to carry out recruitment and selection processes while adhering to important legislation such as the Equality Act 2010 and GDPR legislation.

Our Equal Opportunities Policy underpins the recruitment and selection process and can be used as a resource for further detail on how Ecctis ensures Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion within the recruitment and



selection process.

## **6.6 Performance Management and Disciplinary Procedures**

This Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy applies to Ecctis' Performance Management, Disciplinary, Capability, and Equal Opportunities policies. All employees should be given the same opportunities for development as well as treated with dignity and respect with a fair and just procedure should any capability or disciplinary issues arise.

Evaluation of performance or undergoing any disciplinary procedures is based purely on factual evidence, not on pre-conceived assumptions or stereotypes about an employee. For example, when considering performance management or development, we would not assume a new mother's length of future service or working pattern. All of the discrimination types discussed early in this policy should be actively discouraged.

## **6.7 Key Protected Characteristic Areas**

Ecctis does not have specific policies regarding each of the protected characteristics, however the key points surrounding these characteristics are an integral part of Ecctis' organisational commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion:

### **6.7.1 Age**

Ecctis believes having employees employed that represent all generations and ages contribute to the success of our organisation facilitated through knowledge and idea sharing. Ecctis supports employees of all generations by providing excellent career opportunities, training and development, and room for progression and growth within the organisation. We ensure that all employees are treated equally when it comes to these opportunities, ensuring that aging in the workplace does not lead to a reduction in opportunities. This is underpinned by the discussed Recruitment and Selection process, our Performance Management Policy, policies surrounding health such as the Menopause Guidance and our benefits offered to employees.

### **6.7.2 Disability**

Ecctis is committed to addressing any unjustified discrimination against people with disabilities as well as promoting an inclusive culture in which disabilities should not be stigmatised. In this policy, disability is a broad definition that can include physical, cognitive, and mental health issues, along with any longer-term health issues.

Ecctis understands that disability is not always noticeable externally and can sometimes be unseen. Ecctis strives to destigmatise and ensure that any employee with a disability is given the adequate resources, or reasonable adjustments required for them to succeed and develop within the organisation. This is supported by our Mental Health Policy, as well as by Mental Health First Aider's that we have among the business to support employees.

### **6.7.3 Marriage and Parenthood**

Ecctis understands that employees have family lives outside of work, and this should not hinder opportunities for progression or development due to external familial obligations. Ecctis provides support through enhanced familial leave as well as a Flexible Working Policy. Ecctis is committed to providing the same opportunities for development and progression regardless of marriage and parenthood status, ensuring that the opportunities do not diminish should an employee have a family, and can be both underpinned by the recruitment and selection process and the Performance Management Policy.

### **6.7.4 Sex and Gender**

Ecctis is committed to challenge discrimination on the basis of sex or gender. We promote equality and strive to eradicate unjust discrimination based on gender, including actively challenging non-inclusive language, or stereotyping in relation to sex or gender. Ecctis understands that people who have undergone gender reassignment or perceived gender reassignment could be exposed to additional discrimination. Ecctis aims to offer any support required from individuals in these circumstances, and challenges employees at all levels to treat their colleagues and external stakeholders, clients, and suppliers with respect and dignity, and enable everyone to be recognised by the pronouns they wish.

### **6.7.5 Race/Ethnicity**

The core of Ecctis' work involves working with individuals and members from across the globe. Having a workforce that represents some of the different cultures we provide services to not only enriches how we do business and the quality of our services, but also enriches Ecctis as an organisation with the sharing of experiences and ideas.

Ecctis understands that today there are still prejudices placed on people of different ethnicities or race and extends further to those seeking asylum or refugee status. Ecctis encourages and welcomes employees from all these backgrounds and ensures that employees from these backgrounds are given the same opportunities for progression and development within Ecctis. Our recruitment and



selection process and Performance Management Policy is robust to ensure this, and any complaints of unjust discrimination are taken seriously, and discriminatory behaviour is actively challenged.

This also applies to our clients, customers, and suppliers, and Ecctis is committed to providing the same quality of service and care to all of our applicants regardless of their culture, ethnicity, or race.

#### **6.7.6 Religion or Belief**

Ecctis respects the various religions or beliefs held by our employees, clients, customers, and suppliers. Ecctis supports this by allowing, when business needs can be met, flexibility on meetings and annual leave surrounding additional religious holidays or cultural events such as Eid, Diwali, Ramadan, or Chinese New Year to employees who wish to take time off to celebrate with their families and friends. Ecctis also allows for employees to swap up to 3 of the 8 bank holidays in a year (Good Friday, Early May Bank Holiday, and the August Bank Holiday) to be taken on a cultural or religious date of significance for them to promote inclusivity and to celebrate our diverse workforce.

#### **6.7.7 Sexual Orientation**

Ecctis is committed to supporting LGBTQIA2S+ individuals, and strive to foster an environment in which gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, nonbinary, and heterosexual people can feel they do not have to feel anxious about being themselves fully. Ecctis understands that there is still unjust discrimination against LGBTQIA2S+ individuals and challenge homophobia or discrimination against our fellow colleagues and clients, customers, and suppliers.

Ecctis strives to give all members of the LGBTQIA2S+ community the same opportunities for development and progression and ensuring that negative stereotypes and any type of discrimination are not tolerated.

### **6.8 Bullying and Harassment**

Bullying and harassment – whether on grounds of sex, race, gender reassignment, ethnic or national origins, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion, or belief or for any other reason are unacceptable behaviours that the Company will not tolerate. Every employee of Ecctis. has the right to be treated with dignity and respect. Appropriate disciplinary action, which may include dismissal, will be taken against any employee, of whatever seniority, who partakes in bullying and harassment.

Bullying and harassment can be seen as an abuse of power and does not align with Ecctis' core values laid out in this policy and will not be tolerated.

Ecctis has a Dignity at Work Policy which is applied to all instances of bullying and harassment and can be used as a resource for the full definitions, procedures, and consequences of bullying and harassment at Ecctis.

## **6.9 Research Practices**

As a trusted provider of research, evaluation and insight to Ministries of Education, government agencies, international awarding bodies, professional bodies and other key educational and policy stakeholders, Ecctis is fully committed to the conduct of high-quality, accurate and ethical research and reasoned analysis, based on the following core principles:

- All research must reflect Ecctis' stance as an independent evaluator, free from discrimination, bias or self-interest
- All research must be based on a transparent, robust and dynamic methodology to ensure reliability and mitigate for unconscious bias
- All research must be conducted with respect and care for participants, intended beneficiaries and other potential parties that may be impacted by the work.

The International Research team maintains a Research Code of Practice, designed to safeguard the quality and integrity of our research, from inception and research design through to completion.

Further case examples of Ecctis commitment can be found in a separate library document which is continuously updated with examples of our efforts to champion an equal, diverse, and inclusive working culture.

## **6.10 Service Provision Practices**

Ecctis is committed to ensuring that our provision of service adheres to this policy. Ecctis treats all our applicants with respect, dignity, and consideration, both in our direct interaction and communication with them and indirectly via our internally communication channels. We expect the same treatment from our applicants and will not tolerate any ill-treatment or abuse of our employees.

We adhere to the Equality Act 2010, and treat our applicants equally regardless of age, race/ethnicity, sex and gender, sexual orientation, nationality, familial status, disability, or religion/beliefs.

When assessing an applicant's qualifications, Ecctis does not discriminate on any grounds including on the applicant's sex and gender, race/ethnicity, disability, language, religion/belief, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, association with national minority,

property, birth or other status, or on the grounds of any other circumstance not related to the merits of the qualification for which recognition is sought.

With the understanding the applicants who hold refugee or asylum-seeking status may not be able to present some, or any documents relating to their qualification, Ecctis will endeavour to provide a comparison for qualifications held by these individuals when possible and offer contextual information about an award when no documentation is available.

## **6.11 Communications and Events**

Ecctis is committed to ensuring that our communications and events adhere to this policy when possible.

We are committed to equality, diversity, and inclusion. This includes adhering to the principle of this EDI policy in the marketing and promotional material that is produced by the business.

At our events we often use external speakers to add value, insight and expertise. We always strive to identify speakers from diverse backgrounds; this is one of the most important criteria we use when determining who to invite to speak at our events.

Further case examples of Ecctis commitment can be found in a separate library document which is continuously updated with examples of our efforts to champion an equal, diverse, and inclusive working culture.

## **7.0 RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **7.1 Management**

Whilst this policy applies to all employees, management within Ecctis are the leaders within the organisation who are responsible for ensuring that the policy is fairly implemented and for effectively managing grievances or complaints regarding discrimination, bullying or harassment, or unequal opportunities. Management can seek support from Human Resources for guidance on how to follow the policy and procedures accurately and effectively. Human Resources also provides training to all managers as part of the line management induction training to give them tools and information to enable them to carry out the appropriate enforcement of this policy.

Managers are responsible for not dismissing complaints based on being perceived as 'too sensitive' and should take all complaints at equal face

value and approach each issue with sensitivity and care and a consistent approach in line with the best practice laid out within this policy and other policies that underpin this one.

Managers have the responsibility to ensure our customers, clients, and suppliers are aware of this policy and ensuring that they are adhering to this policy where applicable.

## **7.2 Human Resources**

Human Resources are responsible for maintaining the policy, ensuring the policy is aligned with current best practice and employment law. Human Resources also will be responsible for acting as the point of contact and support for managers to implement the policy, as well as be an available and confidential resource to all employees who wish to raise an issue surrounding Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion.

## **7.3 All Employees**

As discussed in the policy, Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion is at the core of Ecctis, as our diverse workforce enables us to deliver our services to individuals and members across the globe. Therefore, it is essential that all employees are aware that the responsibility of implementing day to day practice of this policy lies with each employee of Ecctis regardless of contracted hours, contract length, or length of service, or workplace location, each employee must contribute and commit to the adherence to this policy.

Employees should be familiar with this policy, champion the equal and just treatment of their peers, clients, customers, and suppliers as well as speaking out against behaviours that go against this policy or Ecctis core values. Any behaviour that is not seen to value our differences in culture, background, and diversity should be actively challenged to enable a culture of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion at Ecctis.

## **8.0 REVIEW AND MONITORING**

- 8.1 Ecctis is committed to continuously evaluating the effectiveness of this policy and ensuring the library of efforts to maintain an Equal, Diverse, and Inclusive culture are maintained and can be demonstrated. Ecctis also must continuously ensure suppliers and external contractors are adhering to policies that are similar, and hold similar standards of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion.
- 8.2 Ecctis commits to formally reviewing the policy on a minimum of once every three years and to communicate any updates to the entire organisation. A copy of this policy is also made accessible to all employees via our online system, KRONOS.





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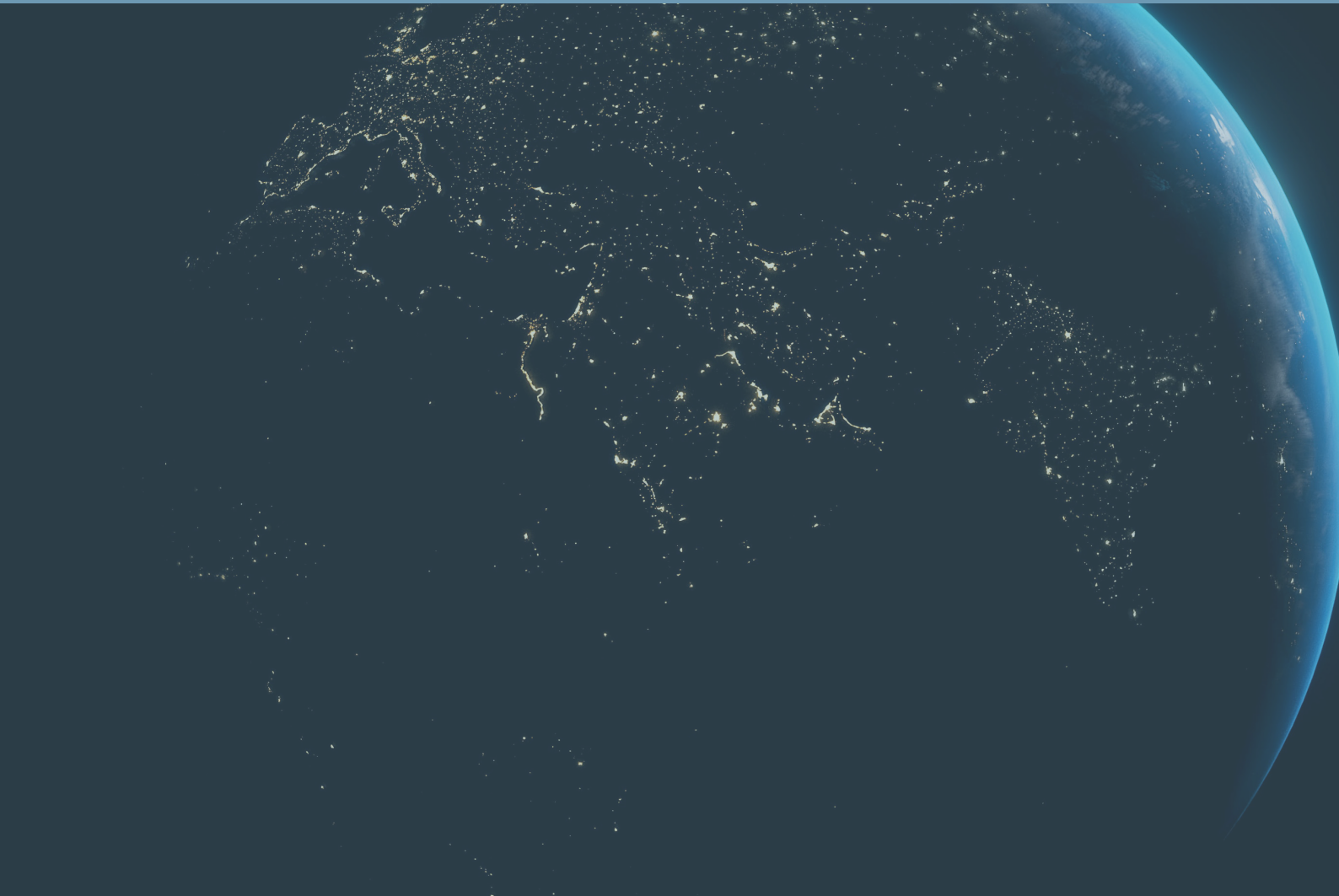
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