

EQUALITY & FAIR ACCESS POLICY

EPAO STANDARDS



Document Version Control

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Amendment history

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10/10/05	v0.1	KE	Initial Draft
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17/03/22	V1.1	CM	Minor amends to copy
26/01/23	V1.2	CM	New logo

1. Scope

This policy outlines the Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE) approach to complying with Equality and Fair accessibility in the delivery of the IMechE's End Point Assessment service. It also aims to comply with Equality & Diversity requirements and fair access to all Apprentices.

The IMechE is committed to ensuring that we meet the individual needs of an Apprentice without affecting the integrity of the End Point Assessment. As such our access arrangements comply with the Equality Act 2010.

The Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE) is committed to promoting equal opportunities.

2. References

The following, in whole or in part, are referenced in this document and are indispensable for its application:

- Equality Act 2010
- Reasonable Adjustments Policy

3. Terms & Definitions

Title	Definition
IMechE	Institution of Mechanical Engineers
EPAO	End Point Assessment Organisation
EPA	End Point Assessment
ESFA	Education & Skills Funding Agency
Ofqual	The Office of Qualifications & Examinations Regulation
SRO	Senior Responsible Officer
IfATE	Institute for Apprentices & Technical Education

4. Responsibility

This policy applies to individuals involved with any aspect of the design, delivery, assessment, and award of IMechE's End Point Assessment service. This includes:

- Employees of the IMechE EPAO
- Third party providers/Centre's and their employees supporting the delivery of IMechE EPA
- All assessors
- EPA Executive Board
- EPA Standards Committee
- Assessment design
- End Point Assessment Operating Team (including Head of UK Business Development,
- End Point Assessors
- EPA Governance (Operations and Standards)
- Appeal Panel Members
- Assessment delivery/administration (including third parties/centres)

It is the responsibility of the IMechE to ensure that all of the above are aware of and familiar with the contents of this policy and adhere to it.

The following core responsibilities are upheld:

Entity	Responsibility
EPA Executive Board (Governing Board – operations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communicating policy to all departments linked to IMechE EPAO - Monitor and review all complaints and appeals on an ongoing basis that may suggest discriminatory practice
Head of UK Business Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communicating and discussing the policy to staff within the EPA Operating Team - Ensure that Centre's have in place an Equality Policy - Report on a monthly basis to the EPA Executive any complaints and appeals with regards to this policy - Monitor any complaints and appeals with regards to a Centre's Equalities policy which impact on the delivery or assessment of IMechE qualifications - Monitor the policy on an annual basis in consultation with the Diversity and Inclusion Committee
EPA Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Checking that all new staff, including freelance, contractors, assessors have received Equality and Diversity Training as appropriate - Reviewing complaints and appeals in line with policy linked to Equality and Fair Access - Maintain register of complaints and appeals linked to Equality and Fair Access - Deliver annual refresher training with regards to this policy and its application

5. Commitment Statement

The IMechE is committed to delivering an End Point Assessment Service that is fair, accessible and does not include any unnecessary barriers to entry. The IMechE have implemented an procedure reasonable adjustments. As such this policy should be read in conjunction with the Reasonable Adjustments Policy.

The adjustments put in place must not advantage the Apprentice nor affect the integrity of the assessment. At IMechE we fully support the principles and working practices of Equal Opportunities and Diversity, and as such they are embedded into our values, behaviours and Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.

The IMechE opposes all unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of:

- sex (including pregnancy or civil partnership status)
- martial or civil partnership status
- gender reassignment
- sexual orientation
- race or racial group (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins)
- religion or belief
- age (or perceived age)
- caring responsibility or
- disability (past or present)
- ability

- domestic circumstances
- colour
- culture
- social background
- employment status
- any other grounds or status

Those handling any requests for reasonable adjustments (including Centres) should also refer to the appropriate standards provided by the Trailblazer apprenticeship group.

6. Definition

The Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation (Protected Characteristics).

Discrimination can be direct or indirect discrimination.

Section 53 of the Equality Act 2010 specifically applies to qualifications bodies and their duty to ensure that persons are not discriminated against in the arrangements, terms or the administration of awards (either through victimisation, harassment, conferment or withdrawal of a qualification).

A copy of the Equality Act 2010 can be found here:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

7. Compliance

The IMechE will take all possible steps to ensure that our End Point Assessment provision is fair for all Apprentices accessing our provision from design and development through to assessment delivery and awarding End Point Assessment.

In order that we comply with the Equalities Act the following steps will be taken:

- Provide Equality training and guidance to staff at induction stage and then annually or as appropriate
- Ensure that all End Point Assessments have no features that could disadvantage any apprentices with a protected characteristic, or create barriers to entry other than those directly related to the purpose of the End Point Assessment
- Ensure that individuals are not victimised, discriminated, or harassed
- Ensure the language used in IMechE End Point Assessment materials is clear, free from bias and appropriate to those accessing our provision.
- Ensure the ongoing monitoring of assessment materials
- Ensure robust Quality Assurance processes to review and monitor the delivery and assessment process
- Ensure fairness in our application of all access arrangements for End Point Assessments.
- Ensure that apprentices with a protected characteristic or those with special access requirements are neither advantaged or disadvantaged in End Point Assessments in comparison to apprentices who do not share that characteristic, ensuring that all achievement in End Point Assessment is fair and comparable
- Ensure that the IMechE considers all access requests relating to End Point Assessments that are received, except where acceptance of the request is not logistically possible or where acceptance would undermine the reliability or integrity of the assessment.
- Ensure that all staff and Assessors linked to Centres are aware of the contents of this policy (see Centre requirements)
- Monitor and investigate all complaints and appeals that may suggest discriminatory practice
- Monitor and review the effectiveness of this policy

- We will make this policy available to Apprentices, Employers and Training Providers

8. Centre Requirements

It is incumbent upon the IMechE as the Recognised EPAO to ensure that Approved Centre's involved in the delivery of End Point Assessment adhere to the following:

- Approved Centres must enable Applicants to have equal access to training and assessment in line with the Equality Act 2010 and protected characteristics. Assessment must similarly be undertaken without discrimination.
- Approved Centres are required to have in place appropriate policies to ensure that such discrimination does not occur either directly, indirectly or as a result of pressure from third parties. This policy should apply to all satellite branches. The Approved Centre is required to have appropriate arrangements in place to monitor its application and effectiveness.
- Approved Centre must have in place a Reasonable Adjustments Policy which is communicated to learners and implemented accordingly
- Approved Centres are responsible for ensuring Assessors are working in accordance with the Equalities Act 2010 when undertaking Assessments
- Undertake the delivery of IMechE qualifications in accordance with all applicable Equalities Legislation
- Inform IMechE promptly of any complaints or appeals with regards to their Equalities Policy which impact on the delivery or assessment of IMechE qualifications.

9. Monitoring the Success & Relevance of Our Arrangements

As part of the Apprentice registration, the IMechE will collect information on diversity, requests for reasonable adjustments / special considerations, access arrangements and feedback from learners, centres and other stakeholders.

Any issues that are identified (including within Approved Centre's) and which suggest that the IMechE's provision of service may have unnecessarily impacted on an Apprentice will be reported to the EPA Executive Board, who will review the IMechE's provision, services, and materials to make appropriate changes and amendments. The details of any ongoing reviews will be made available to Regulatory Bodies upon request

10. Review

This policy will be reviewed on annual basis by the Head of UK Business Development in consultation with the Diversity and Inclusion Committee and approved by the EPA Executive Board.

11. Noncompliance

Compliance with this policy is a requirement of the Centre Agreement. In the event of noncompliance Sanctions can be imposed.

12. Contact us

If you have any queries about the contents of this policy, please contact the EPAO Manager
Kerry.ellis@imeche.org