



Seirbhís Tacaíochta  
don Bhreisoideachas  
FURTHER EDUCATION  
SUPPORT SERVICE

Seirbhís Tacaíochta don  
Bhreisoideachas  
FURTHER EDUCATION  
SUPPORT SERVICE

# EQUALITY ACTION PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Resource to support FETAC  
Registered Providers in  
implementing Quality Assurance  
Policy B2: Equality



SUPPORTING DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION AND SKILLS PROVIDERS

This resource is part of a series of publications developed by FESS to support DES funded Providers / Centres in the effective implementation of their FETAC Quality Assurance Requirements.

The publications are available to download at [www.fess.ie](http://www.fess.ie).

The Further Education Support Service gives permission to Department of Education and Skills Providers to reproduce extracts and templates from this resource for non-commercial use, provided that the original source is acknowledged.

ISBN: 978-0-946791-32-3

# Contents

Introduction	3
--------------	---

Equality Action Planning	4
--------------------------	---

## Phase 1 PREPARATION

Step1	Secure Management Support	5
Step 2	Initial Equality Awareness Training	6
Template	Equality Action Planning Proposal	7

## Phase 2 INFORMATION GATHERING

Step 3	Equality Audit/Review	8
Template	Audit/ Review Tool	12
Step 4	Consult with Marginal Groups	31

## Phase 3 ACTIONS

Step 5	Communicate the Findings of the Review	33
Step 6	Develop Action Plan	33
Template	Equality Action Planning	34
Step 7	Amend/Develop Policies	35
Step 8	Training	37
Step 9	Implement the Plan	38
Step 10	Review the Process	39

Appendix 1	Policy Document	40
Appendix 2	<i>List of Agencies and Resources for Further Training</i>	47

# Preamble

**The FETAC Quality Assurance in Further Education and Training Policy and Guidelines for Providers, V1.3, state that:**

*Programmes of education and training and related services should be delivered in a manner that accommodates diversity, combats discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity. Delivery agencies should have an institutional capacity and commitment to combat discrimination, to accommodate and make adjustments for diversity. This capacity needs to be planned and systematic rather than ad hoc, informal or reactive.*

*A provider's Equality Policy should express its commitment to equality in employment and service provision and anti harassment. (Page 24)*

During 2007 the Further Education Support Service (FESS) delivered an extremely well received programme of seminars on the theme of Equality in Further Education. To build on this experience and in response to Provider demand, in January 2009 the FESS entered a phase of resource development for the implementation of Equality processes which are directly related to the requirements of FETAC Quality Assurance (in particular *Policy Area B2 Equality*) and will be of assistance to Providers in meeting their legislative obligations.

To facilitate this resource development phase an Equality Task Group was established by the FESS. Through the workings of this Task Group resources have been developed and are now being made available to support Department of Education and Skills (DES) funded FE Providers in implementing both *Equality Training (B2.1)* and *Equality Planning (B2.2)* processes.

## The FESS Equality Task Group comprised representatives from FESS and key stakeholders:

CAROL BAXTER	Head of Development, Equality Authority
SIOBHAN CLUSKEY	Equality & Disability Officer, Co. Wicklow VEC
CRONA GALLAGHER	Adult Education Officer, Co. Donegal VEC
MARY GANNON	Education for Reconciliation, City of Dublin VEC Curriculum Development Unit
VIRGO HYNES	FETAC QA Co-ordinator, Co. Wexford VEC
DEIRDRE KEYES	Co. Dublin VEC Education Officer, Representing Irish Vocational Education Association
PAT O'MAHONY	Education & Research Officer, Irish Vocational Education Association
MARIE ROONEY	County Co-ordinator for Research & Policy, Co. Dublin VEC

*FESS would like to acknowledge and thank the members of the Task Group for facilitating and contributing to this process*

# Introduction

This Equality Action Planning Framework is structured in three distinct operational phases:

## Phase 1 PREPARATION

**Step 1 Secure Management Support** – involves planning how the process will be managed

**Step 2 Initial Equality Awareness Training** – involves training for all staff and is an essential aspect of the planning and preparation phase

## Phase 2 INFORMATION GATHERING

**Step 3 Equality Audit/Review** – involves carrying out an audit/review of all aspects of the service provided to Learners from an equality perspective

**Step 4 Consult with Marginal Groups** – ensures that Learners and groups representing Learners from diverse backgrounds are consulted

## Phase 3 ACTIONS

**Step 5 Communicate the Findings of the Review** – involves keeping staff and Learners informed throughout the process

**Step 6 Develop Action Plan** – involves the development of a plan to meet the equality objectives identified as priorities in Phase II

**Step 7 Amend/Develop Policies** – involves Equality/Equal Status policy development guidelines

**Step 8 Training** – involves further training to meet needs identified in the Equality Action Plan

**Step 9 Implement the Plan** – involves ongoing activities in meeting the objectives of the Equality Action Plan

**Step 10 Review the Process** – involves a cycle of monitoring the plan, reviewing progress and repeating the process

The Further Education Support Service has developed resources for each phase. As with all quality assured systems the Equality Action Planning Framework is structured as a cyclical, ongoing process to be implemented by Providers within their particular context and timeframe.

These resources are suggested as models of good practice and are not intended to be exhaustive or exclusive.

# Equality Action Planning





## Step 1 Secure Management Support

The Equality Action Planning process will vary depending on the Provider context. Equality Action Planning requires the support of management within the Provider. Depending on the context this may involve the Principal, Centre Director, Adult Education Officer, Education Officer or Chief Executive Officer. Providers may opt to consult with outside agencies or network with similar Providers to plan the process.

The management of the Provider/Centre may appoint an individual, committee or equality working group to manage the process. An equality working group will include relevant key staff members with Learner representatives where possible.

An Equality Action Planning proposal should be agreed with management prior to commencement of the process. This will identify how the process will be managed, who will be involved, the time scale, resources required and key markers of success.

Equality Action Planning requires the support and involvement of all Provider/Centre staff and relevant stakeholders. Staff and management should be informed about the initial proposal and provided with regular progress reports. This may take place at various fora including management team meetings, subject department meetings and whole staff meetings.

See a sample **Equality Action Planning proposal template** on page 7.



## Step 2 Initial Equality Awareness Training

This section of the FESS Equality Action Planning Framework addresses the fundamental elements to be considered when dealing with the area of Initial Equality Awareness Training.

Providers should bear in mind that effective equality training initiatives should afford participants the opportunity to explore the concept and nature of equality and reflect on their own personal views and experiences. Therefore interactive discussion should be encouraged at all stages of the training. In order to ensure that this is facilitated recommended core elements/content of training and guidelines for engaging a trainer are outlined below.

### 1. Core Elements of Initial Equality Awareness Training

A facilitated reflection on;

- awareness of diversity
- attitudes towards diversity
- understanding of equality.

An exploration of;

- compliance with Legislative/Statutory obligations
- theoretical models of equality
- case studies
- equality issues within the context of the Provider/Centre
- adherence to FETAC Quality Assurance obligations with reference to overall requirements and specific reference to Policy Area B2 (accessible at [www.fetac.ie](http://www.fetac.ie))
- planning for progressing from awareness to equality action planning/ structure for moving forward.

### 2. Professional Background/Characteristics: Criteria to Consider when Selecting an Equality Trainer

The Trainer should;

- have experience/familiarity with the Irish Further Education system & FETAC Quality Assurance requirements
- have skills & experience in facilitating training groups
- show willingness to engage in pre-planning
- show ability to use interactive methodologies as appropriate
- agree a clear outline for the sessions following interactive discussion with Provider
- agree that all sessions will be evaluated
- preferably be trained in equality or an area relevant to equality
- show knowledge of current research and developments in equality
- have previous experience of delivering equality training or similar
- have experience of working with any of the nine groups covered under the equality legislation.

The above is a suggested list of criteria.  
It is not intended to be exhaustive, and is not in any order of priority.





## Equality Action Planning Proposal Template

This Equality Action Planning Proposal template is used to map the planning, management and implementation of the Equality Action Planning Framework. It enables Providers to clarify the requirements of the process.

Equality Action Planning Proposal			
Aims and objectives:			
Who is involved in Managing the Process? (Equality working group)			
Suggested Stages in the Process	Who is involved/ resources required	Time frame	Key markers of success
1. Planning			
2. Equality awareness training			
3. Equality Audit/Review			
4. Consultation with marginal groups			
5. Communicate findings			
6. Develop Action Plan			
7. Amend/develop Policy			
8. Implement plan			
9. Follow up training			
10. Review process			
Reporting: Who will the working group report to, and when will reporting take place?			

This template  
is available to  
download at

## Step 3 Equality Audit/Review

In order to meet the requirements of the Provider's Quality Assurance agreement with FETAC, Policy Area B2: Equality, Providers must carry out an Equality Audit. FESS has developed the Equality Audit/Review tool for this purpose.

### Purpose of an Equality Audit/Review Tool

Equality audits enable the Provider/Centre to examine an area of their practice or policy in relation to equality, to identify areas which need to be improved, and to identify priorities for action. They are an essential step in the development of an equality action plan, and should lead naturally to proposals for action in the priority areas identified.



### How to carry out an Equality Audit/Review

The format provided as an exemplar is only one of many ways to carry out an equality audit/review. It has been designed around the areas which are central to the Provider's Quality Assurance system, and therefore dovetails with the work which Providers/Centres would normally do in relation to Quality Assurance and, in particular, to Self-Evaluation.

Providers/Centres can adapt the exemplar model to;

- review practice and policy in relation to a specific group or a specific equality ground  
e.g. disability, age...
- review a specific service provided  
e.g. guidance
- review practice in relation to a specific concern which has arisen  
e.g. harassment or racism.

While a review generally precedes an action plan, a small review of a specific area could form part of an action plan and inform future actions.



## How to use the Equality Audit/Review Tool<sup>1</sup>

The Equality Audit/Review Tool has been designed to encompass a variety of Provider contexts and priorities. Providers may adapt or amend the tool in accordance with their particular requirements and resources.

This tool can be used in a number of different ways and within varied timeframes.

- the audit/review can be completed at a general staff meeting – small groups can work on different sets of questions for feedback and agreement, with Learners being similarly consulted
- section 1 Ethos can be completed by all staff, and subsequent sections can be completed one by one over a period of time at subject or programme meetings, with concurrent consultation with Learners
- certain sections can be prioritised and worked on over a period of time
- specific Learner groups, programmes or major issues can be prioritised and the audit/review adapted to focus on these in particular.

It is probable that most Providers/Centres will choose to initially audit/review one or two of the areas as specified in the Equality Audit/Review Tool, develop an action plan around them, and then move on in following years to look at other areas.



## Moving from the Equality Audit/Review to an Equality Action Plan

Completion of an equality audit/review enables the Providers/Centres to identify their equality action priorities. Once these priorities for action are clear the next step is to develop specific actions and plan how they will be carried out.

### Note

Action planning templates can help to structure the planning process as outlined in Phase 3 Step 6, Develop Action Plan, of this resource (page 33).

In addition a number of different action planning templates are available on the School Development Planning Initiative (Post-Primary) website and can be accessed at [www.sdpi.ie](http://www.sdpi.ie).



1. The template format is based on one used in *Respect for All*, an audit tool on diversity and racism developed by the UK Qualifications and Curriculum Authority in 2006. (See [www.qca.org.uk](http://www.qca.org.uk)).

## Equality Audit / Review Tool (Pages 12-30)

### Preparing for the Audit/Review

It is important that time is taken to plan the audit/review process to ensure that it is inclusive and effective. The following checklist can assist in ensuring this.

- ☐ We have had equality awareness training for staff
- ☐ All staff will have an opportunity to participate in the audit/review
- ☐ The involvement of a broad range of diverse Learners is being facilitated through appropriate means e.g. class discussion, focus groups, feedback forms, questionnaires etc.
- ☐ We have allocated sufficient time for reflection and discussion in carrying out the review
- ☐ Staff members have sufficient information to complete the review

### Using the Equality Audit/Review Tool - Approaches to Specific Sections

#### Section 1 Ethos: this includes Quality Assurance Policy Area B2 Equality

This section could be used as a stand-alone exercise, preferably with the whole staff. It could form part of equality awareness training, or be used as a follow-up to training. Where it is not possible to use it with the whole staff, it could be used with a small group that has responsibility for managing and promoting equality within the service. Learners could be included through the use of focus or class groups.

*It is recommended that Providers/Centres start with the Ethos section before moving on to one or more of the other areas.*

#### Section 2 Communications: Quality Assurance Policy Area B1

This section could be carried out with a whole staff, a communications working group, or a group with specific responsibility in this area, as well as with a diverse group of Learners.

#### Section 3 Access, Transfer and Progression: Quality Assurance Policy Area B4

This section can be carried out by managers and staff with specific responsibility for this area, including Department Heads, Guidance Counsellors and learning support staff, and should include consultation



with Learners on their experiences, expectations and needs. Consultation with other stakeholders such as community organisations, representative bodies and other educational institutions can also be considered here.

## Section 4 Programme Development Delivery and Review: Quality Assurance Policy Area B5

This part is subdivided as follows:

*Need Identification* – this could be carried out by a group with particular responsibility in this area and in consultation with Learners

*Programme Design and Planning*– this could be carried out by a subject/programme department or a whole staff, and in consultation with Learners

*Programme Delivery* – this is good exercise for a whole staff to undertake at a staff meeting or in subject/programme department meetings and for Learners to consider in class groups

*Learner Records* – this is more relevant to managers or staff with responsibility in this area

*Learning Facilities and Resources* – This could be carried out by a group with specific responsibility in this area and/or in consultation with Learners/Learner representative groups.



## Section 5 Fair and Consistent Assessment of Learners: Quality Assurance Policy Area B6

This could be carried out with all those responsible for planning and carrying out assessment, in consultation with Learners in relation to the areas which directly affect them, in particular the policy areas - B6.2 *Information to Learners*, B6.4 *Reasonable Accommodation*, B6.8 *Feedback to Learners* and B6.9 *Learner Appeals*.

The Equality Audit/Review Tool is structured as a series of statements designed to reflect all aspects of the services of the Provider/Centre. Carrying out the review involves matching each statement with one of the following of three evaluation statements

1 = *We are doing well in this area and work is ongoing*

2 = *We have made some progress in this and know what still needs to be done*

3 = *We haven't started to work on this yet, but acknowledge that it may need further consideration*



**Allocating the evaluation statements will assist Providers/Centres in prioritising areas for action.**



## Step 3 - Ethos and General Equality Considerations (Quality Assurance Policy Area B2)

Ethos	1. 2. 3.			Evidence from Current Practice	Action Priorities
Our Provider/Centre is committed to the promotion of equality in all areas of our work and relationships					
We have developed an equality statement and all staff and Learners are aware of it					
Our mission statement is in keeping with our obligations to actively promote equality for all Learners and staff					
We recognise that equality is about meeting individual and different needs					
All of our staff have received professional development on equality awareness					
All of our staff are aware of our responsibility to promote equality					
As staff, we feel confident that we know how to and have the capacity to actively promote equality					

This template is available to download at

© 2010 Further Education Support Service  
Equality Audit / Review Tool

1 = We are doing well in this area and work is ongoing  
2 = We have made some progress in this and know what still needs to be done  
3 = We haven't started to work on this yet, but acknowledge that it may need further consideration

www.fess.ie

## Step 3 - Ethos and General Equality considerations (Quality Assurance Policy Area B2)

Ethos <i>(continued)</i>	1. 2. 3.			Evidence from Current Practice	Action Priorities
An equality working group/committee, which includes staff and Learners, has been set up to work on our equality action plan					
Resources have been made available to promote equality					
A code of conduct, which has been drawn up in consultation with Learners and staff, aims to promote mutual respect and recognition that diversity is the norm					
The physical environment makes it clear that diversity is respected and celebrated					
Clearly communicated and understood systems exist to deal with any complaints of discrimination or mistreatment					
In getting feedback from Learners, we include opportunities to comment on equality issues					

This template is available to download at

1 = We are doing well in this area and work is ongoing  
2 = We have made some progress in this and know what still needs to be done  
3 = We haven't started to work on this yet, but acknowledge that it may need further consideration

© 2010 Further Education Support Service

Equality Audit / Review Tool

www.fess.ie

## Step 3 - Communications (Quality Assurance Policy Area B1)

(See also Access - Information (page 16) and Assessment - Information for Learners (page 27))

Communications	1.	2.	3.	Evidence from Current Practice	Action Priorities
All of our communications materials and media reflect the diversity within our Learners, staff and the wider community					
All of our information and materials are universally accessible i.e. are provided in a range of formats and languages which ensure that all Learners and staff can access them					
In designing new materials or processes we actively take into account the diversity within Learner groups, the local community and wider society					
We keep up to date with assistive technologies and our communication strategy is designed to make full use of them					
Our promotional materials are fully accessible and send out a clear message that our centre/college is inclusive					
All essential processes and relevant forms and materials e.g. enrolment forms and process, programme information, assessment are fully accessible to all our Learner					

This template is available to download at

1 = We are doing well in this area and work is ongoing  
2 = We have made some progress in this and know what still needs to be done  
3 = We haven't started to work on this yet, but acknowledge that it may need further consideration

## Step 3 - Communications (Quality Assurance Policy Area B1)

(See also Access – Information (page 16) and Assessment – Information for Learners (page 27))

### Communications (continued)

### Action Priorities

### Evidence from Current Practice

### 1. 2. 3.

<p>We have inclusive procedures and structures in place to ensure that all Learners are able to contribute feedback and suggestions for improvement on their educational experience</p>						
<p>Our feedback procedures ensure that minority groups/groups at risk of experiencing inequality can easily provide feedback on issues specifically of concern to them</p>						
<p>We have a system in place to communicate this feedback to relevant stakeholders where appropriate</p>						
<p>External individuals and agencies with potential importance for our Learners and our centre/college e.g. employers, other providers, community groups, funding agencies and others are able to access information on our programmes and services</p>						
<p>Our communication strategy and processes are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are inclusive. Reviews include consultation with Learners, staff, users in the community and other relevant agencies</p>						

This template is available to download at

1 = We are doing well in this area and work is ongoing

2 = We have made some progress in this and know what still needs to be done

3 = We haven't started to work on this yet, but acknowledge that it may need further consideration

© 2010 Further Education Support Service

Equality Audit / Review Tool

www.fess.ie

## Step 3 - Access, Transfer and Progression (Quality Assurance Policy Area B4)

Access - Information Provision	1.	2.	3.	Evidence from Current Practice	Action Priorities
Information is delivered through a range of approaches and formats accessible to a diversity of Learners					
In promoting our courses/service, we use marketing and publicity strategies that are targeted to include diverse Learner groups and provide information in a form that is easily accessible to all potential Learners					
Our promotional literature and physical environment communicate an ethos of inclusive learning and invite/welcome interest from all potential Learners					
Our promotional and information activities are flexible and equally accessible to all our potential Learners					
Potential Learners are fully informed about available financial support and helped to access it if necessary					
All Learners are provided with accessible information on the award, the programme structure, entry requirements and assessment to facilitate successful participation in the programme					

This template is available to download at

1 = We are doing well in this area and work is ongoing  
2 = We have made some progress in this and know what still needs to be done  
3 = We haven't started to work on this yet, but acknowledge that it may need further consideration



## Step 3 - Access, Transfer and Progression (Quality Assurance Policy Area B4)

Access - Entry Arrangements	1.	2.	3.	Evidence from Current Practice	Action Priorities
All Learners are provided with accessible information on the knowledge, skills and competences needed to participate successfully in the programme					
Our policy and procedures for allocating places to Learners on our programmes are transparent, and all applicants are treated in a fair, equal and consistent manner					
Our selection procedures, and entry requirements are adapted to include specific supports to facilitate individuals and groups with particular needs					
Our interview and registration activities and processes are equally accessible to all our potential Learners					
We have appropriate facilities for interviewing and assessing potential Learners with physical disabilities, such as visual or hearing impairments					
Prior learning is valued and is fairly assessed, using the FETAC RPL Guidelines					

This template is available to download at

1 = We are doing well in this area and work is ongoing  
2 = We have made some progress in this and know what still needs to be done  
3 = We haven't started to work on this yet, but acknowledge that it may need further consideration

## Step 3 - Access, Transfer and Progression (Quality Assurance Policy Area B4)

Access - Participation	1.	2.	3.	Evidence from Current Practice	Action Priorities
Potential Learners have access to a range of supports to enable them to commence courses e.g. childcare, flexible timetabling, preparatory ESOL or literacy support, guidance/counselling etc.					
Learners have access to a range of supports to enable them to successfully complete programmes and achieve awards, including flexible timetabling, reasonable accommodation, compassionate consideration, compensatory tuition/study skills					
Staff know what assistive technologies are available to Learners with specific physical needs and know how to access them					
Where the centre is unable to provide appropriate supports, staff are aware of agencies which can provide them, and give the relevant information to Learners					
Learners from diverse groups are successful in achieving positive learning outcomes					

This template is available to download at

1 = We are doing well in this area and work is ongoing  
2 = We have made some progress in this and know what still needs to be done  
3 = We haven't started to work on this yet, but acknowledge that it may need further consideration

## Step 3 - Access, Transfer and Progression (Quality Assurance Policy Area B4)

# PHASE 2 STEP 3 - EQUALITY AUDIT / REVIEW

Transfer and Progression	1.	2.	3.	Evidence from Current Practice	Action Priorities
Positive/ targeted measures are put in place to improve outcomes for Learner groups where gaps and inequalities have emerged					
The awards we offer provide all our Learners with opportunities to transfer or progress to other courses, training or employment.					
Supports are available to enable Learners with different needs and from diverse groups to access transfer and progression options					
Learners with different types of learning support requirements and needs are provided with information about rights, entitlements, finance, accessible options and opportunities					
We liaise with relevant agencies in order to access support for Learners in progressing to further education, training and employment					
We keep records of progression outcomes for Learners from diverse groups. Where gaps and barriers are identified, we take action to remedy them					

This template is available to download at

1 = We are doing well in this area and work is ongoing  
2 = We have made some progress in this and know what still needs to be done  
3 = We haven't started to work on this yet, but acknowledge that it may need further consideration

© 2010 Further Education Support Service  
Equality Audit / Review Tool

www.fess.ie

## Step 3 - Programme Review (Quality Assurance Policy Area B5)

Need Identification	1.	2.	3.	Evidence from Current Practice	Action Priorities
We review programmes annually to ensure that the needs of all our current Learners are being met					
We have structures in place to consult with the local community on programme needs, those which have newly arisen or those which are not currently being met					
We consult representatives of minority groups/groups at risk of experiencing inequality when new programmes are being developed					
We also consider research on the needs of minority groups/groups at risk of experiencing inequality produced by national bodies and other sources					

1 = We are doing well in this area and work is ongoing  
2 = We have made some progress in this and know what still needs to be done  
3 = We haven't started to work on this yet, but acknowledge that it may need further consideration

This template  
is available  
to download  
at

www.fess.ie

## Step 3 - Programme Review (Quality Assurance Policy Area B5)

### PHASE 2 STEP 3 - EQUALITY AUDIT / REVIEW

Programme Design & Planning	1.	2.	3.	Evidence from Current Practice	Action Priorities
All our programme design actively takes into account diversity within Learner groups, the local community, and wider society					
Our programmes are planned to allow for maximum access by Learners from a diversity of backgrounds and situations. We actively take into account specific needs of current and potential Learners e.g. ability, disability, culture, family situation, age .....					
Our programmes aim to equip all our Learners to live and work in a diverse society and interdependent world					
Our programmes provide Learners with opportunities to consider issues of equality and inequality, and promote respect for diversity					

1 = We are doing well in this area and work is ongoing  
2 = We have made some progress in this and know what still needs to be done  
3 = We haven't started to work on this yet, but acknowledge that it may need further consideration

This template  
is available  
to download  
at

www.fess.ie



## Step 3 - Programme Review (Quality Assurance Policy Area B5)

Programme Delivery	1.	2.	3.	Evidence from Current Practice	Action Priorities
Our course content and teaching materials reflect and value diversity					
In preparing and using teaching materials, we take into account the cultural, religious and social background of Learners					
Our teaching and learning methodologies are inclusive of Learners with disabilities					
We take care to include examples, references and content relevant to diverse groups of Learners					
We take care to use unbiased texts/ content or to help Learners critically analyse this where it is present					
Our teaching and learning methodologies are flexible and varied so as to include Learners with diverse learning styles					
We have developed inclusive teaching methodologies which endeavour to meet the needs of all Learners, for example, methodologies which support ESOL Learners, Learners with literacy difficulties etc					

This template is available to download at

1 = We are doing well in this area and work is ongoing  
2 = We have made some progress in this and know what still needs to be done  
3 = We haven't started to work on this yet, but acknowledge that it may need further consideration

© 2010 Further Education Support Service  
Equality Audit / Review Tool

www.fess.ie

## Step 3 - Programme Review (Quality Assurance Policy Area B5)

# PHASE 2 STEP 3 - EQUALITY AUDIT / REVIEW

23

Programme Delivery <i>(continued)</i>				Evidence from Current Practice	Action Priorities
1.	2.	3.			
We use group work to help Learners develop the skills to work co-operatively within diverse groups					
Group work is used to support the integration of Learners from diverse backgrounds					
Mutual respect and positive relationships are developed within class groups through strategies such as group contracts, structured discussion etc					
We are aware that teaching and learning is not value-free and we include reflection on the values transmitted through our teaching in programme reviews					

Learner Records				Evidence from Current Practice	Action Priorities
1.	2.	3.			
Learner records are kept in such a way that it is possible to identify progression difficulties for specific groups e.g. minority ethnic groups, lone parents etc					
Records of support needs, whether met or not, are kept for programme review and future planning					

This template is available to download at [www.fess.ie](http://www.fess.ie)

© 2010 Further Education Support Service  
Equality Audit / Review Tool

1 = We are doing well in this area and work is ongoing  
2 = We have made some progress in this and know what still needs to be done  
3 = We haven't started to work on this yet, but acknowledge that it may need further consideration

[www.fess.ie](http://www.fess.ie)

## Step 3 - Programme Review (Quality Assurance Policy Area B5)

### PHASE 2 STEP 3 - EQUALITY AUDIT / REVIEW

Learner Facilities & Resources	1. 2. 3.			Evidence from Current Practice	Action Priorities
Learners have adequate access to premises and facilities					
Learners have adequate access to resources which they need					
Learners are consulted before and during courses to ensure that their resource needs are being met					
Systems are in place to ensure that Learners find it easy to communicate their needs to staff					
Learners are made aware of their responsibility to make their needs clearly known to staff					
The centre is conscious of its responsibility to inform Learners if it cannot meet their needs					
All staff are aware of what resources and supports are available, and make full use of them					

This template  
is available  
to download  
at

1 = We are doing well in this area and work is ongoing  
2 = We have made some progress in this and know what still needs to be done  
3 = We haven't started to work on this yet, but acknowledge that it may need further consideration

## Step 3 - Fair and Consistent Assessment of Learners (Quality Assurance Policy Area B6)

Co-ordinated Planning of Assessment			1.	2.	3.	Evidence from Current Practice	Action Priorities
We identify the barriers to participation and the learning support needs of our Learners early in the programme so that these can be taken into account when planning assessment							
We have systems in place to inform all our tutors/teachers about any specific requirements/learning supports that Learners may need							
We co-ordinate planning of assessment is to ensure that Learners with different learning support needs are accommodated across all the programme modules							
When planning assessment we consider the diverse nature of the specific Learner group and devise briefs and instruments which optimise opportunity for all our Learners to succeed							
When planning assessment, we plan actions which need to be taken to ensure that reasonable accommodation measures are in place							

This template is available to download at

1 = We are doing well in this area and work is ongoing  
2 = We have made some progress in this and know what still needs to be done  
3 = We haven't started to work on this yet, but acknowledge that it may need further consideration

## Step 3 - Fair and Consistent Assessment of Learners (Quality Assurance Policy Area B6)

### Co-ordinated Planning of Assessment *(continued)*

	1. 2. 3.			Evidence from Current Practice	Action Priorities
Where we are unable to provide appropriate support for our Learners, we consult with relevant agencies for information and resources					
When planning the timing of assessment, we take into account dates and times that may have a cultural or religious significance for our Learners					
When planning assessment, we take into account Learner needs and the physical location where the assessment is to take place					

1 = We are doing well in this area and work is ongoing  
 2 = We have made some progress in this and know what still needs to be done  
 3 = We haven't started to work on this yet, but acknowledge that it may need further consideration

This template  
is available  
to download  
at

www.fess.ie



## Step 3 - Fair and Consistent Assessment of Learners (Quality Assurance Policy Area B6)

Information to Learners	1. 2. 3.			Evidence from Current Practice	Action Priorities
Care is taken and checks are in place to ensure that all Learners including those with specific needs are kept informed about assessment requirements					
We foster relationships where Learners feel secure and encouraged to inform us of any specific learning needs or difficulties that they may have					
We inform Learners about the learning supports and reasonable accommodation measures that are available to them					
We provide information in accessible formats to all Learners on assessment requirements prior to assessment commencing					
We provide information in accessible formats to all our Learners on our assessment policies – including repeats and our appeals process					

This template is available to download at

1 = We are doing well in this area and work is ongoing  
2 = We have made some progress in this and know what still needs to be done  
3 = We haven't started to work on this yet, but acknowledge that it may need further consideration

© 2010 Further Education Support Service  
Equality Audit / Review Tool

www.fess.ie

## Step 3 - Fair and Consistent Assessment of Learners (Quality Assurance Policy Area B6)

Assessment performed by Third Parties	1.	2.	3.	Evidence from Current Practice	Action Priorities
We take care to ensure that third party assessors have the capacity and facilities to work with Learners with diverse needs					
Where third parties are involved in assessment, we provide them with guidelines on our ethos, policy and procedures in relation to equality and inclusion in our service					
Third party assessors are made aware of any specific learning needs of our Learners and of any supports or reasonable accommodation measures available to them					
Where appropriate, we provide guidelines to third party assessors on conducting assessment and providing Learner feedback in accordance with our own policy and procedures on the fair and consistent assessment of Learners					

This template is available to download at

## Step 3 - Fair and Consistent Assessment of Learners (Quality Assurance Policy Area B6)

Reasonable Accommodation	1.	2.	3.	Evidence from Current Practice	Action Priorities
In planning assessment, we offer a variety of assessment methods, which are designed to be as inclusive as possible of all Learners					
We are aware that we need to make reasonable accommodation(s) for some Learners (students with a disability, specific learning difficulty etc) so that they can demonstrate their ability, skills and competence on an equal footing with other students					
We have received training on reasonable accommodation in assessment					
We keep ourselves informed of good practice elsewhere and of developments in assistive technology					
Learners and staff are aware of their rights and responsibilities in relation to reasonable accommodation					
We have a system in place which makes the process of requesting and providing reasonable accommodation clear and transparent for Learners and staff					

This template is available to download at

© 2010 Further Education Support Service  
Equality Audit / Review Tool

1 = We are doing well in this area and work is ongoing  
2 = We have made some progress in this and know what still needs to be done  
3 = We haven't started to work on this yet, but acknowledge that it may need further consideration

www.fess.ie

## Step 3 - Fair and Consistent Assessment of Learners (Quality Assurance Policy Area B6)

Reasonable Accommodation <i>(continued)</i>				1.	2.	3.	Evidence from Current Practice	Action Priorities
We recognise that Learners with similar disabilities may require different accommodations. We agree accommodations after individual discussion with each Learner who requests it								
Accommodations which are made are agreed by all those involved in programme delivery and assessment								
We assure confidentiality to all Learners in relation to disabilities								
We are aware that reasonable accommodation may be necessary for people covered by any of the nine Equality Legislation grounds and provide this where required								

1 = We are doing well in this area and work is ongoing  
 2 = We have made some progress in this and know what still needs to be done  
 3 = We haven't started to work on this yet, but acknowledge that it may need further consideration

This template  
is available  
to download  
at

## Step 4 Consult with Marginal Groups

### Consult with Learners from Marginal Groups

Consultation with Learners ensures that the views, experiences and requirements of all Learners are taken into account. Careful planning is essential for the consultation process. Consideration should be given to the following;

#### Planning:

**Why** are we consulting? Identify the purpose and expected outcomes of the process.

**Who** is to be consulted? Providers must determine who they are going to consult with while ensuring that the consultation process is comprehensive and balanced. Providers may chose to consult with for example; all Learners; prospective Learners; specific groups of Learners from across the nine equality grounds; specific groups of Learners who appear to experience barriers to access, participation, and outcome in the programmes and services; past Learners.

**How** will consultation take place?

Methods of consultation may include;

- survey/questionnaire
- interviews
- focus groups/workshops.

The consultation methods must be accessible to all Learners.

Aspects of the service for consultation are included in the Equality Audit /Review template allowing the outcome of the consultation to feed into the Equality Action Plan.

#### Time and resources

Adequate time and resources must be allocated for the successful implementation of the consultation process.



#### USEFUL RESOURCES:

National Disability Authority: Ask Me: Guidelines for Effective Consultation with People with Disabilities, available at [www.nda.ie](http://www.nda.ie)

CDVEC Disability Support Service: Principals' Manual, available at [www.cdvec.ie](http://www.cdvec.ie)



## Consultation with Representative Bodies

Representative bodies are formal national organisations or networks that represent the interests of various groups such as people with disabilities, refugees and asylum seekers, lone parents, lesbian, gay, and bisexual people, young people, older people, people of different religion, race or ethnic background, Travellers, women, men and transgender people. By consulting with representative bodies Providers can ensure that the views and needs of all their Learners and future Learners are taken into account in the Equality Action Planning process. The process of consulting with representative bodies will vary depending on the Provider/Centre context and requires careful planning.

### Planning:

**Why** are we consulting? Identify the purpose and expected outcomes of the process.

**Who** is to be consulted? Groups representing Learners already in the service, or groups representing all Learners and potential Learners across the nine grounds. Some Providers may wish to consult with bodies representing specific groups within their catchment who they feel are not represented in their service, or with groups that they feel experience barriers within their service. Consultation may take place with local organisations and/or national organisations.

**How** will consultation take place?

Methods of consultation may include;

- meeting
- interviews
- survey/questionnaire.

**How** will the consultation process inform the Equality Action Planning process?

Feedback from Learners and representative bodies should be documented/considered when addressing areas of the Equality Audit /Review Tool and in prioritising actions for the action plan.

**Appendix 2** (page 47) contains a list of resources which includes a list of representative bodies. Further information can also be found at the Equality Authority website, [www.equality.ie](http://www.equality.ie).



## Step 5 Communicate the Findings of the Review

When the Equality Audit/Review and consultation process have been completed it will be necessary to communicate the findings to all of those involved. This may be done in a number of ways including at staff meetings, subject department meetings, through newsletters or circulars to staff and Learners, and through the Provider website.

The Equality Planning Committee should plan this process and decide on what information is to be circulated to whom and at what stage of the process.

The key information to be disseminated will be identified within the Equality Audit/Review Tool, and should include a summary of;

- areas where the Provider is doing well in relation to equality and work is ongoing
- areas where some progress is being made and future improvements have been identified
- areas which have not yet been addressed but have been identified for further consideration.

When communicating the findings it may be useful to ask for feedback on the Equality Review process and on prioritising future actions and targets.

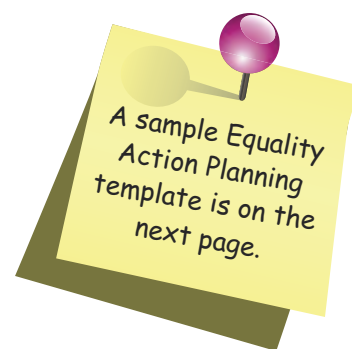
## Step 6 Develop Action Plan

### The Equality Action Plan

The outcome of the Equality Audit /Review process is the identification of priorities in relation to equality and decisions about the actions required.

The Equality Action Plan outlines the;

- **priority objective**/desired outcomes
- **steps**/tasks necessary in order to achieve these objectives
- **resources** required to achieve the objectives
- **responsibility** - who will ensure that the steps are taken to achieve the objectives?
- **time frame** for the completion of the steps and the achievement of the objectives
- **key markers of success** to verify that objectives have been achieved
- **monitoring progress** to ensure that the implementation of the specified stages is taking place in accordance with the steps outlined and within the timeframe, to follow up on actions which have not been progressed
- **evaluation** of actions taken and targets achieved.



# Equality Action Planning Template

Phase 3 Step 6 - Equality Action Planning Template				
Objective	Steps to be taken	Responsibility	Time Frame	Key Markers of Success
1.				
<b>Monitoring:</b>		Responsibility:	Dates:	
Comments/Recommendations:				
<b>Evaluation:</b>		Responsibility:	Dates:	
Comments/Recommendations:				
Objective	Steps to be taken	Responsibility	Time Frame	Key Markers of Success
2.				
<b>Monitoring:</b>		Responsibility:	Dates:	
Comments/Recommendations:				
<b>Evaluation:</b>		Responsibility:	Dates:	
Comments/Recommendations:				

This template is available to download at

## Step 7 Amend/Develop Policies

### Equality Policy Development Process

FETAC Quality Assurance in Further Education and Training: Policy and Guidelines for Providers v1.3, states that:

*Programmes of education and training and related services should be delivered in a manner that accommodates diversity, combats discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity. Delivery agencies should have an institutional capacity and commitment to combat discrimination, to accommodate and make adjustments for diversity. This capacity needs to be planned and systematic rather than ad hoc, informal or reactive. (2008; Page 24)*

As part of their Quality Assurance system in relation to Policy Area B2 Equality, Providers must have a policy and procedures in place which express their commitment to equality in employment and service provision and anti harassment.

The policy statement and objectives should reflect/be in keeping with the mission statement of the Provider. Providers' obligations in relation to equality are clearly stated in national legislation, in particular the Equal Status Acts 2000 – 2008, and the Employment Equality Act 1998 - 2004. The legislation specifically refers to the nine equality grounds (gender, marital status, family status, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, race and membership of the Traveller community). In addition Providers should also consider the core principles underpinning adult education in Ireland as outlined in Learning for Life: the White Paper on Adult Education (2000).

### Legislative requirements of the Equal Status Acts and the Employment Equality Acts

An Equality Policy should reflect the Provider's commitment to meet its obligations under the Equal Status Acts 2000 – 2008 which prohibit discrimination (including harassment, sexual harassment and victimisation) in educational establishments for Learners across nine equality grounds (gender, marital status, family status, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, race and membership of the Traveller community)

An Equality Policy must also reflect the Provider's commitment to meet its obligations under the Employment Equality Act 1998 - 2004, Section 12 of the Act sets out that there can not be discrimination in entry to vocational training (broadly defined as any system of instruction which is exclusively concerned with training for occupational activity) for Learners across the nine equality grounds. Positive action is allowed under the employment equality act on the grounds of gender, disability, membership of the Traveller community and older people over 50.

The Equality Policy outlined in the Provider's Quality Assurance system agreed with FETAC is primarily concerned with Learners and does not address the obligations of Providers as employers toward staff as employees, but aims to support centres in promoting a culture of equality for Learners staff and other users of the centre.



## Core Principles underpinning Equality in Education

The White Paper on Adult Education: Learning for Life states that adult education should be underpinned by three core principles;

- (a) **a systemic approach** which recognises that the interfaces between the different levels of educational provision, and the quality of the early school experience have a critical influence on Learners' motivation and ability to access and progress in adult education and training...
- (b) **equality** of access, participation and outcome for participants in adult education, with pro-active strategies to counteract barriers arising from differences of socio-economic status, gender, ethnicity and disability...
- (c) **inter-culturalism** – the need to frame educational policy and practice in the context of serving a diverse population as opposed to a uniform one, and the development of curricula, materials, training and inservice, modes of assessment and delivery methods which accept such diversity as the norm...

(2000; Pages 12–13)

## Equal Status Policy

In meeting their obligations as employers and providers of services to individuals, Providers may develop an Equal Status Policy. An Equal Status Policy is the application in practice of the Equal Status Act and applies only to the nine equality grounds.

In meeting the requirements of their Provider Quality Assurance agreement with FETAC Providers/Centres are required to develop an Equality Policy and a set of related procedures which Providers may wish to extend beyond the nine grounds of the equality legislation in order to reflect their Mission and ethos.



*For further information refer to the following publications by the Equality Authority:*

Guide to the Equal Status Acts 2000 – 2008, [www.equality.ie](http://www.equality.ie)

Schools and the Equal Status Act, [www.equality.ie](http://www.equality.ie)

Appendix 1 (page 40) contains a sample guide to policy development.





## Equality Statement

As part of the Provider Quality Assurance agreement with FETAC, Policy Area B2 Equality, Providers are required to have an Equality Statement. An Equality Statement is part of the overall equality policy and reflects the Providers commitment to equality in all of its programmes and services. The Equality Statement could include statements around the organisation's valuing of diversity and commitments towards equality in relation to the Equal Status Acts and the Employment Equality Acts.

A centre's Equality Statement would ideally include the following areas, appropriately worded to reflect the context of the learners and local community;

- statement of respect for and valuing of diversity as enriching the educational community
- equality of access, opportunity and participation
- non-discrimination on the basis of any of the nine grounds, or other grounds which place people at risk of suffering from inequality
- freedom from harassment or bullying
- inclusion and participation of all in decision making as appropriate to their roles
- meeting diverse needs of Learners within the centre and community, in particular the needs of groups at risk of suffering from inequality
- accommodation for people with disabilities
- equality proofing of all policies and practice.

The Equality Statement should be drafted in consultation with staff, Learners and other stakeholders.

## Step 8 Training

Equality action planning requires that all staff receive Initial Equality Awareness Training (Phase 1 Step 2).

During the Equality Action Planning process the need for training in relation to specific issues may emerge. Training requirements will vary depending on the Provider context.

Specific training needs may be identified as necessary to build the capacity of individual staff members, specific groupings or all staff. Training may be implemented to address specific actions outlined in the plan, for example;



- learning support
- sourcing and using assistive technology
- developing accessible information and promotional materials
- understanding barriers for Learners from across the nine equality grounds.

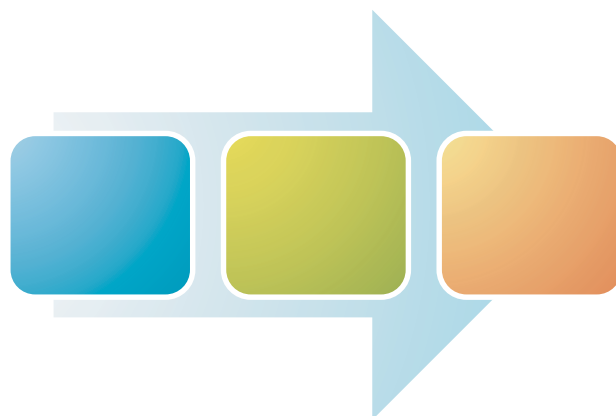
Appendix 2 (page 47) outlines a list of possible training topics and includes some suggested resources and links to websites of relevant organisations.

## Step 9 Implement the Plan

The Equality Action Planning Committee is responsible for ensuring the implementation of the Equality Action Plan in accordance with the Timeframe identified in the Equality Action Planning Template (Phase 3, Step 6).

Priority objectives may be achieved in the short, medium or long – term as specified during the planning process.

In order to ensure the effective implementation of all actions the Equality Committee should consistently monitor and review progress and ensure that all those involved are kept informed of actions which have been completed and work which is on-going. This may require a regular meeting/reporting structure.



### Monitoring Progress

This refers to the process whereby progress in meeting the objectives specified in the action plan is monitored to ensure that the necessary steps are being followed within the time frame. Through this process the Equality Action Planning Committee can ensure that the plan is being implemented and can follow up on steps which have not been achieved, and where necessary develop a revised plan towards meeting these objectives.

### Review Progress

Reviewing the action plan involves reviewing how the plan is working in relation to achieving its objectives and determining;

- what is working well – including strategies used and outcomes achieved
- what isn't - including strategies which are not realising objectives and objectives that are not producing the desired outcomes
- what changes need to be made – changes and amendments to the Equality Action Plan in relation to the review process.



## Step 10 Review the Process

### Equality Action Planning Cycle



### Provider Quality Assurance agreement with FETAC Policy Area B9 Self Evaluation of Programmes and Related Services

In accordance with FETAC Quality Assurance requirements all registered Providers must complete the Self Evaluation process. As with all systems and processes within Providers it will be necessary to review equality procedures regularly. These equality resources will produce evidence which will contribute directly to this process.

For further detail please see *A Phased Approach to Self Evaluation Processes for the Further Education Sector*, available at [www.fess.ie](http://www.fess.ie).



## Appendix 1 Policy Document

### What is an Equality Policy?

An equality policy clearly sets out a Provider's/Centre's commitment to the promotion of equality within its service with a specific focus on Learners.

An equality policy is an important element in planning a systemic approach to equality within a Provider/Centre.

While framing the equality ethos of the service the policy may also outline details which influence the day-to-day operations of the Provider/Centre and the service it provides to Learners.



### Why have an Equality Policy?

The Benefits of an Equality Policy to a Provider/Centre include:

- Helping to ensure quality in service provision with an emphasis on meeting the needs of a diversity of Learners
- The promotion of positive staff/Learner relationships that in turn contribute to enhanced staff morale and engagement with the service provision
- An equality policy will assist organisations in their compliance with the Equal Status Acts 2000 - 2008. It will contribute to addressing the Provider's liability under the Acts.

### The content of an Equality Policy

The following are suggested headings for the structure of the Policy;

- Introduction
- Statement of commitment
- Taking action
- Implementation



When planning and devising an Equality Policy, Providers/Centres may devise their policy in consultation with;

- staff, and other stakeholders
- Learners – in particular those from diverse groups including those who may be at risk of experiencing discrimination under the nine grounds
- groups representing Learners from across the nine grounds.

Below are examples of the types of information/statements that Providers may include in their policy under the headings.



# Sample Policy Development Statements

## PURPOSE

### Sample Statement:

The purpose of ...*include Provider/Centre name here*...'s equality policy is to:

Identify our/.....'s commitment to combating discrimination, accommodating diversity and promoting equality.

Promote equality of access, participation and outcome for all our Learners

Ensure Legal compliance (*for example*)

This equality policy reflects ...*name of Provider/ Centre*...'s commitment to meet its obligations under the Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2008 which prohibit discrimination (including harassment, sexual harassment and victimisation) in educational establishments for Learners across the nine equality grounds (gender, marital status, family status, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, race and membership of the Traveller community).

## CONSULTATION

### Sample Statement:

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff and with diverse groups of Learners including Learners from across all of the nine grounds. National/ regional/local organisations representing groups experiencing inequality have also been consulted

## Statement of Commitment

### Sample Statement:

...*name of Provider/Centre*... seeks to ensure that the services that it provides;

- are free from discrimination, sexual harassment, harassment and victimisation
- accommodate diversity among all Learners including those from across the nine grounds covered by the equality legislation and others at risk of experiencing inequality and meets needs that are specific to particular groups of Learners
- make reasonable accommodation for Learners with disabilities
- seek to benefit all Learners including those from across the nine grounds by promoting equality and implementing positive action measures where necessary.

.....*name of Provider/Centre*... will not tolerate discrimination, sexual harassment, harassment or victimisation of Learners by employees and non-employees, such as other service users or contractors. Such behaviour may lead to disciplinary action (in the case of employees) or to other sanctions such as suspension of contractors or exclusion from our premises (in the case of non-employees).



### MAINSTREAMING

*Sample Statement:*

.....*name of Provider/Centre...* seeks to ensure that the diverse needs of all Learners including those from across the groups covered by the equality legislation and others at risk of experiencing inequality are taken to account in the planning, design and delivery of its programmes and related services.

### OTHER POLICIES

*Sample Statement:*

This policy should be read in conjunction with ..... *name of Provider/Centre...* 's other policies (specify).

### COMPLAINTS

*Sample Statement:*

A complaints/grievance procedure is established under this equal status policy. .....*name of Provider/Centre...* will treat all complaints by Learners with fairness and sensitivity and in as confidential a manner as possible.



## Taking Action

### COMMUNICATION WITH LEARNERS

*Sample Statement:*

#### Materials

Information, course and other materials produced for and by .....*name of Provider/Centre...* will be provided in a relevant and accessible manner to all Learners including those from across the nine grounds and others at risk of experiencing inequality

This includes using; (*for example*)

- different formats such as Braille and large print
- different media such as an accessible website
- different languages.
- appropriate format for Learners with literacy difficulties.

### PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

Materials produced to promote our service's programmes will be non-discriminatory and will communicate .....*name of Provider/Centre...*'s commitment to equality for Learners.

### DIRECT CONTACT

In its direct contact with service users, ... *name of Provider/Centre...* seeks to ensure that; (*for example*)

- Learners are dealt with in a considerate, courteous and professional manner
- Learners experience a harassment free environment
- language barriers are effectively addressed, including through the use of interpreters
- reasonable accommodation is made for people with disabilities.

### SERVICE USER FEEDBACK

.....*name of Provider/ Centre...* encourages the participation of Learners in our feedback systems, with particular emphasis on including a diversity of Learners including Learners from across the nine grounds and others at risk of experiencing inequality. We also encourage feedback from organisations representing groups experiencing inequality. These feedback systems include;

(for example)

- Learner questionnaires /comment cards /website questionnaires
- Learner /tutor meetings, Guidance Service/Student Support Officer/ Learner meetings
- Learner panels/focus groups/Student Councils
- Regular meetings with representative organisations.

### ACCOMMODATING DIVERSITY

.....*name of Provider/ Centre...* will accommodate the diversity of Learners including those from across the nine grounds;

(for example)

- actively identifying and addressing the diverse needs of Learners including the needs of Learners from across the nine grounds and others at risk of experiencing inequality
- providing reasonable accommodation for Learners with disabilities
- ensuring flexibility in the provision of services so as to allow for the diversity of Learners to be accommodated
- taking positive action measures to promote equality in practice for disadvantaged persons by providing facilities, arrangements, services and assistance required to cater for the special needs of Learners
- supporting Learners in accessing affordable childcare.

### REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

.....*name of Provider/Centre...* seeks to anticipate the requirements of Learners with disabilities (including those with physical, intellectual and sensory disabilities and mental health issues) and to ensure that Learners with disabilities are not excluded by physical, systemic, attitudinal or communication barriers.

.....*name of Provider/Centre...* takes steps to assess the needs of individual Learners with disabilities and to identify how best to meet these needs. The...  
*Management/Coordinator/Learning Support/Equality Officer or other named role...* holds responsibilities in this regard.

.....*name of Provider/Centre...* seeks to ensure that;

(for example)

- the physical environment in our buildings and surrounding grounds are accessible and free from barriers (*specify how*)
- programmes and related services are provided using flexible systems, trained staff and clear procedures
- alternative methods of making services available are provided where appropriate and reasonable

## PROMOTING EQUALITY

- communication strategies and materials are accessible
- staff communicate effectively with Learners with disabilities and do not display patronizing attitudes or make assumptions about people's abilities or inabilities.

.....*name of Provider/Centre...* seeks to provide an environment where, in dialogue with staff, a person with a disability can identify their needs and how these can be met.

.....*name of Provider/Centre...* will conduct an equality review at appropriate intervals. These reviews will examine;

- the current diversity of Learners
- the level of equality experienced by different Learners in terms of access to, participation in and outcomes from the our programmes
- the impact of its equality policies on equality for a diversity of Learners
- staff and Learner perceptions of equality and diversity issues and our performance in addressing these.

.....*name of Provider/Centre...* will prepare an equality action plan on foot of the equal status review.

## Implementation

### IMPLEMENTATION

*Sample Statements:*

... *Management/Principal Director/ (specify who)*... is responsible for implementing this policy and for ensuring that Learners do not experience discrimination, that diversity is accommodated and that equality is promoted for Learners.

All staff should co-operate in the development and implementation of policies and procedures to promote equality for Learners.

Non-employees (such as other service users or contractors) should also cooperate with this policy.

A senior member of staff/equality officer has responsibility for promoting the effective implementation of this policy.

### COMMUNICATING THIS POLICY

*Sample Statements:*

.....*name of Provider/Centre...* is committed to communicating this policy to;

- all staff
- Learners
- potential Learners
- parents of Learners (*where appropriate*)
- business contractors

- work placement supervisors
- local organisations representing groups at risk of experiencing inequality.

This policy will be communicated through;

- publication and dissemination of the policy
- provision of training on the policy to all staff
- display of the policy in public areas of the our service
- reference to the policy in information material
- staff handbooks
- Learner handbooks.



## Equality Systems

### EQUALITY COMMITTEE

*Sample statements:*

An equality committee will support implementation of this policy. Its terms of reference are as follows:

The Equality Committee should have the following terms of reference;

- to support the development of an equality action plan
- to sustain a focus on the equality policy in all sections and at all levels of the service
- to ensure that the commitments included in the equality policy are implemented;
- to keep the equality policy under review
- to report to senior management on the progress made in implementing the commitments in the equality policy.

### EQUALITY & DIVERSITY TRAINING

.....*name of Provider/Centre*... undertakes to develop an equality and diversity training programme aimed at providing staff with;

- awareness of the differing needs of groups that experience inequality including those from across the nine grounds covered by the equality legislation and others at risk of experiencing inequality
- skills to enable them to promote equality, combat discrimination and accommodate diversity in their interaction with other employees and with customers
- skills to assess the needs of Learners with disabilities and other diverse needs of Learners including those across all nine grounds and others at risk of experiencing inequality
- a knowledge and understanding of the equality system and equality policy for their service
- information on the Employment Equality Acts 1998 to 2008 and the Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2008.

### COMPLAINTS

.....*name of Provider/Centre*... will maintain an accessible system for dealing with any complaints under this policy. This system will be fair and as confidential as possible.

The complaints procedure will involve;

- a fair and transparent investigation of all complaints
- timescales within which service users will receive responses to complaints.

This system does not affect the individual's right to bring a complaint under the Equal Status Act 2000 to 2008.

### MONITORING & REVIEW

*Sample Statements:*

.....*name of Provider/Centre*... will actively seek feedback from service users and staff on the implementation of this policy.

Data will be collected to identify the degree to which the policy is successfully promoting equality for service users. The data collected will be treated in confidence and will comply with data protection legislation.

The operation of this policy will be evaluated on a regular basis and this policy will be updated accordingly.

.....*name of Provider/Centre*... will report on the implementation of this policy and of its equality action plan in its ...*annual report/review/as part of our Self-Evaluation Process (specify how)*.



## Appendix 2 List of Agencies and Resources

*This list is not exhaustive and represents a sample of available information and resources.  
Please see [www.fess.ie](http://www.fess.ie) for updates.*

Resources Area	Links
<b>Disability</b>	<p>National Disability Authority: <a href="http://www.nda.ie">www.nda.ie</a></p> <p>CDVEC Disability Support Service: <a href="http://www.cdvec.ie">www.cdvec.ie</a></p> <p>AHEAD: Association For Higher Education Access and Disability: <a href="http://www.ahead.ie">www.ahead.ie</a></p>
<b>Learning Support</b>	<p>National Learning Network: <a href="http://www.nln.ie">www.nln.ie</a></p> <p>Rehab: <a href="http://www.rehab.ie">www.rehab.ie</a></p> <p>Dyslexia Association of Ireland: <a href="http://www.dyslexia.ie">www.dyslexia.ie</a></p> <p>Special Education Support Service: <a href="http://www.sess.ie">www.sess.ie</a></p>
<b>Assistive Technology</b>	<p>National Centre for Technology in Education: <a href="http://www.ncte.ie">www.ncte.ie</a></p>
<b>English Language Support</b>	<p>Department of Education and Skills Accessing Intercultural Materials Repository (AIM) available at <a href="http://www.education.ie">www.education.ie</a></p> <p>NALA: National Adult Literacy Agency: <a href="http://www.nala.ie">www.nala.ie</a></p> <p>Asylum Seekers in Adult Education: A Study of Language and Literacy needs, available at <a href="http://www.cdvec.ie">www.cdvec.ie</a></p>
<b>Producing accessible materials</b>	<p>NALA: Plain English Writing and Design Tips, available at <a href="http://www.simplyput.ie">www.simplyput.ie</a></p>
<b>Reasonable Accommodation for Learners</b>	<p>State Examinations Commission: Reasonable Accommodation in relation to Examinations, available at <a href="http://www.sess.ie">www.sess.ie</a></p> <p>Equality Authority Publication: Reasonable Accommodation of People with Disabilities in the Provision of Goods and Services, available at <a href="http://www.equality.ie">www.equality.ie</a></p>
<b>Information on Funding Sources</b>	<p>DES: Fund for Students with Special Needs or Disabilities available at <a href="http://www.education.ie">www.education.ie</a></p> <p>Higher Education Authority (HEA): <a href="http://www.hea.ie">www.hea.ie</a></p>
<b>Meeting the Needs of Learners from the Traveller Community</b>	<p>Irish Traveller Movement: <a href="http://www.itmtrav.ie">www.itmtrav.ie</a></p> <p>National Co-Ordination Unit for Senior Traveler Training Centres: <a href="http://www.sttc.ie">www.sttc.ie</a></p>
<b>Intercultural Education</b>	<p>Department of Education and Skills Accessing Intercultural Materials Repository (AIM), available at <a href="http://www.education.ie">www.education.ie</a></p> <p>NCCRI: Guidelines on Anti-racism and Intercultural Training, available at <a href="http://www.nccri.ie">www.nccri.ie</a></p>

Resources Area	Links
<b>Supporting Refugees and Asylum seekers in Education</b>	Irish Refugee Council: <a href="http://www.irishrefugeecouncil.ie">www.irishrefugeecouncil.ie</a>  CDVEC: Immigration and Residency in Ireland: An overview for Education Providers, available at <a href="http://www.cdvec.ie">www.cdvec.ie</a>
<b>Bullying/ Harrassment</b>	Anti Bullying Centre: Trinity College Dublin: <a href="http://www.abc.tcd.ie">www.abc.tcd.ie</a>
<b>One – Parent Families</b>	One Family: <a href="http://www.onefamily.ie">www.onefamily.ie</a> Meeting the needs of one – parent families
<b>Gay Lesbian and Bisexual People</b>	Gay and Lesbian Equality Network: <a href="http://www.glen.ie">www.glen.ie</a>
<b>Older people</b>	Age Action Ireland: <a href="http://www.ageaction.ie">www.ageaction.ie</a>
<b>Gender Issues</b>	National Women’s Council of Ireland: <a href="http://www.nwci.ie">www.nwci.ie</a> Men’s Network: <a href="http://www.mens-network.net">www.mens-network.net</a> Transgender Equality Network Ireland: <a href="http://www.teni.ie">www.teni.ie</a>

## Bibliography

- Department of Education and Science, (2000) Learning for Life: White Paper on Adult Education, available at [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie)
- FETAC: (2008) Quality Assurance in Further Education and Training: Policy and Guidelines for Providers v1.3, available at [www.fetac.ie](http://www.fetac.ie)
- Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (2006):  
*Respect for All*, an audit tool on diversity and racism, available at [www.qca.org.uk](http://www.qca.org.uk)
- School Development Planning Initiative, [www.sdpi.ie](http://www.sdpi.ie)
- The Equality Authority: Booklet on The Equal Status Acts 2000 – 2004, [www.equality.ie](http://www.equality.ie)
- The Equality Authority: Guide to the Equal Status Acts 2000 – 2008, [www.equality.ie](http://www.equality.ie)
- The Equality Authority: Booklet on Schools and the Equal Status Act, available at [www.equality.ie](http://www.equality.ie)
- The Equality Authority: Guidelines for Equal Status Policies in Enterprises, available at [www.equality.ie](http://www.equality.ie)

## Useful Resources

- National Disability Authority – Ask Me: Guidelines for Effective Consultation with People with Disabilities, available at [www.nda.ie](http://www.nda.ie)
- CDVEC Disability Support Service: Principals’ Manual, available at [www.cdvec.ie](http://www.cdvec.ie)



THE FURTHER EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICE IS FUNDED THROUGH  
THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SKILLS