**Implementing Equality in Further Education programmes**

**FESS tools to support the equality proofing of programme delivery and assessment in Further Education – A Supplement to the FESS Equality Action Planning Framework**

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## Context

‘Further Education is a critical hinge and interface between different elements of the education system, and a critical bearer of very important social values.

•    FE is a transition point between schools, Higher Education and work.  It is fundamentally about social inclusion, a place for .... a second chance,

•     FE can be seen as a fulcrum for equality.

*Dr Chris Jude, Education Consultant, Equality in a Time of Change Conference Papers 2007 – 2009, Equality Authority*

In 2010, the Further Education Support Service (FESS) published the Equality Action Planning Framework – a resource to support providers in implementing Equality quality assurance requirements.

In 2013 FESS was funded by the Equality Authority through the Equality Mainstreaming Unit to further develop this resource and provide additional resources for providers in the area of programme delivery and assessment.

**Objectives of the project**

•    To embed equality mainstreaming into the delivery (including the assessment) of the programmes developed through the IVEA / CEEOA National Shared Programme Development Initiative

•    To ensure the consideration of the 9 grounds when delivering the programmes and assessing the learner

•    To develop a suite of templates to facilitate providers / tutors to equality proof the delivery and assessment of the programme descriptors (part A) and the associated programme modules.

The resources that follow were piloted in January 2014. An appendix contains materials, which can be used by providers to provide a half-day workshop for staff.

**Using the checklists:**

The checklists may be used as an integral element of a half day training session. The plan for this half day session and additional supporting materials are included in the appendix. The checklists may also be used individually within the context of staff meetings or CPD sessions.

These checklists were piloted in early 2014 in two locations with staff from a range of Further education settings. Feedback was very positive and tutors/teachers and co-ordinators thought that the checklists would be useful in a number of settings. Some suggestions were:

* When programme planning
* For Programme development , lesson plan development, assessment planning, review and evaluation
* With teachers and cluster groups
* At team meetings

The checklists can be used in a group setting or by individuals as needed. The Equal Status Acts relate to discrimination based on the following **9 grounds**: Gender, Civil Status, Family Status, Age, Race, Religion, Disability, Sexual Orientation, and Membership of the Traveller community. The grounds are reproduced at the start of each checklist.

It is intended that this resource may be used to determine further reflection, discussion and action within the provider context.

## Programme Descriptor Equality Proofing Checklist:

The following is a checklist to be used with programme modules to ensure that a programme is delivered and assessed in line with best equality practice. The Equal Status Acts relate to discrimination based on the following **9 grounds**: Gender, Civil Status, Family Status, Age, Race, Religion, Disability, Sexual Orientation, and Membership of the Traveller Community.

The sections contained in this programme descriptor equality proofing checklist correspond with the sections of the programme descriptors developed through the ETBI/CEEOA National Programme Development Initiative (2010 – 2014). The checklist should be used while referring directly to the relevant programme descriptor(s). The ‘Notes/ What I need to do’ section may be used to determine further action within the provider context.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Delivery Mode | Yes | No | Don’t  Know | Notes/ What I need to do |
| Are all the locations where the programme is delivered accessible to all learners? For example   * Teaching and learning * Work placement * Specialist rooms * Assessment locations |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Delivery methodologies | Yes | No | Don’t  Know | Notes/ What I need to do |
| Can I ensure that the delivery methodologies facilitate the range of learners to fully participate? |  |  |  |  |
| Structure | **Yes** | **No** | **Don’t**  **Know** | **Notes/ What I need to do** |
| Where there is discretion in the choice of programme structure, has consideration been given to the components selected to maximize participation by the full range of learners? |  |  |  |  |

Programme Descriptor Equality Proofing Checklist

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Learner Supports | Yes | No | Don’t  Know | Notes/ What I need to do |
| Is the list of supports adequate to facilitate maximum participation? |  |  |  |  |
| Are processes in place which allow learners to access supports as required? |  |  |  |  |
| Are learners able to access any supports they need to participate fully? |  |  |  |  |
| Planning Assessment | **Yes** | **No** | **Don’t**  **Know** | **Notes/ What I need to do** |
| Are there any issues in the timing of assessment which may result in learners being less favourably treated? |  |  |  |  |

Programme Descriptor Equality Proofing Checklist

## Programme Module Equality Proofing Checklist:

The following is a checklist to be used with programme modules to ensure that programme modules are delivered and assessed in line with best equality practice. The Equal Status Acts relate to discrimination based on the following **9 grounds**: Gender, Civil Status, Family Status, Age, Race, Religion, Disability, Sexual Orientation, and Membership of the Traveller Community.

The sections contained in this programme module equality proofing checklist correspond with the sections of the programme modules developed through the ETBI/CEEOA National Programme Development Initiative (2010 – 2014). The checklist should be used while referring directly to the relevant programme module(s). The ‘Notes/ What I need to do’ section may be used to determine further action within the provider context.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Indicative Content | Yes | No | Don’t  Know | Notes/ What I need to do |
| Are there barriers to participation within the indicative content? |  |  |  |  |
| Does the indicative  content suggest examples that would disadvantage or lead to less favourable treatment for my range of learners? |  |  |  |  |
| Can I find other examples that would satisfy the learning outcomes, which are more appropriate for my range of learners? |  |  |  |  |

Programme Module Equality Proofing Checklist

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Assessment | Yes | No | Don’t  Know | Notes/ What I need to do |
| Does any of the evidence listed in the programme module require my range of learners to take part in activities, which could cause problems or lead to less favourable treatment for them? Can I come up with different activities, which will satisfy the requirements? |  |  |  |  |
| Do the assessment criteria facilitate the full range of my learners to participate fully in assessment activities? |  |  |  |  |

Programme Module Equality Proofing Checklist

# Prompts / Statements to Encourage Further Reflection and Consideration of Equality Issues in Programme Development, Delivery and Assessment

**The section below is comprised of prompts / statements to assist providers in ensuring that best practice equality procedures are in place. These statements will be particularly useful when the provider is looking at all provision, and are intended to encourage further consideration and reflection. The statements are intended to complement the existing FESS Equality Action Planning Framework (FESS, 2007). These prompts / statements may be discussed with staff or may be used for individual work.**

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| Programme Design and Planning |
| 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   * Does my programme allow for learners to consider issues of workplace equality? |
| Our programmes provide Learners with opportunities to consider issues of equality and inequality, and promote respect for diversity   * Does my programme allow for learners to reflect on and consider their own attitudes in relation to equality issues? * Does my programme include positive modeling of recognition and respect for diversity? |

Prompts

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| Programme Delivery |
| Our course content and teaching materials reflect and value diversity.   * Does our college actively promote diversity? How? Some suggestions-Positive statements re. Diversity are reproduced on website, signage and on publications. XXXXXX is committed to promoting diversity. * Specific events are held throughout the year to support diversity * Class /group contracts could include a statement such as ‘we value difference’ * Do my materials, written and visual reflect different cultural, religious and social backgrounds? |
| In preparing and using teaching materials, we take into account the cultural, religious and social background of Learners?   * Are the backgrounds of those that I teach reflected in my materials (written and visual) or do those materials reflect only my own background and experience? * Have my materials changed over time or do they remain the same from year to year? * How do I know? Have I asked my learners whether their experiences are reflected in my materials? |
| Our teaching and learning methodologies are inclusive of Learners with disabilities   * Do I consider learners with a range of disabilities, physical /learning disabilities when planning and delivering my programme? * Am I aware of how sensory disabilities impact learning? |
| We take care to include examples, references and content relevant to diverse groups of Learners   * What examples can I identify in my materials of representations of people who belong to minority groups or groups covered by the nine grounds? * Do I include references to materials relevant to diverse groups? |

Prompts

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| We take care to use unbiased texts/content or to help Learners critically analyse this where it is present.   * Do I review texts and/or content while thinking about their impact on specific groups of learners? * Do I check for stereotypes in my texts/content? * Do I model providing a critical analysis of texts and content and how they apply to specific groups? * Do my learners develop their own analytical skills? |
| Our teaching and learning methodologies are flexible and varied so as to include learners with diverse learning styles   * When planning my programme, am I always aware of the needs of visual learners, kinesthetic learners? * Do I check my programme plan to ensure that it has a variety of content and methodology sufficient to cater for different 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.   * Have I thought about learners with literacy and/language difficulties? * How can I help them through choosing activities and content appropriate for them? * Does my programme module descriptor allow me to use assessment methods which are accessible for those with literacy/language challenges? Visual or Audio methods? |
| We use group work to help learners develop the skills to work co-operatively within diverse groups   * Am I comfortable using group work methods with my learners? * Do all my classes have an opportunity to get to know each other and to agree contracts? * Can I allow for discussion on structured topics? |

Prompts

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| Group work is used to support the integration of learners from diverse backgrounds   * Am I comfortable using group work methods with my learners? * Do all my classes have an opportunity to get to know each other and to agree contracts? * Can I allow for discussion on structured topics? * Are tensions dissipated as they arise in the classroom? |
| Mutual respect and positive relationships are developed within class groups through strategies such as group contracts, structured discussion etc.   * Do all my classes have an opportunity to get to know each other and to agree contracts? * Can I allow for structured discussion on topics? * Are tensions dissipated as they arise in the classroom? |
| 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   * Do my programme reviews include reflection on values? * Do learner reviews ask questions about values? |

Prompts

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| Co-ordinated Planning of Assessment |
| 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   * How do I identify barriers to participation and learning support needs for learners? * How do I document these? * How do I share this information with other tutors/teachers? |
| We have systems in place to inform all our tutors/teachers about any specific requirements/learning supports that Learners may need   * What is the system for informing teachers/tutors of specific requirements/learning support needs of learners? * How do I access the system? |

Prompts

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| We co-ordinate planning of assessment to ensure that learners with different learning support needs are accommodated across all the programme modules   * Do I co-ordinate my assessment planning with others? * How do I know about learner needs identified by other teachers/tutors? |
| When planning assessment we consider the diverse nature of the specific Learner group and devise briefs and instruments which optimize opportunity for all our learners to succeed   * Do I review my assessment instruments after each certification event? * Do I make adjustments suggested by learners’ experience of following the brief? If numerous learners ask the same question, could the brief be made clearer? * Are my instruments written for the learner? * Are they as simple as they can be? * Are they clear and easy to follow? * Have I tested them out prior to giving them to a learner? * In relation to ensuring coordinated planning of assessment * You need to start as early as possible in the delivery of the programme. Ideally you would be planning your assessment before you begin to deliver. * Read the programme module descriptor relating to the area you wish to coordinate with. Meet with the tutor/teacher * Develop an assessment grid – a diagram which plots which learning outcome is assessed by which assessment method. * Decide who will design which brief. * Each person draft the brief(s) and check them * List the briefs with the weightings and LOs, with details of when they will be given to learners – This becomes your assessment plan. * Check that all the LOs are covered * Check that the arrangements you plan satisfy the requirements in section 11c of your programme module descriptors. |

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| When planning assessment, we plan actions which need to be taken to ensure that reasonable accommodation measures are in place   * Am I familiar with my Centre’s procedure on Reasonable Accommodation? * Do I know where to find it? |
| Where we are unable to provide appropriate support for our learners, we consult with relevant agencies for information and resources.   * Do I have all of the information and contacts I need to make appropriate referrals |
| When planning the timing of assessment, we take into account dates and times that may have a cultural or religious significance for our learners   * Do I check timing of assessments against dates that may have a cultural or religious significance for learners? |
| When planning assessment, we take into account learner needs and the physical location where the assessment is to take place. |

Prompts