



British Language Centre Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy

Introduction

The aim of the policy is to ensure that all candidates are treated equally, fairly and with the highest standards of customer care, irrespective of: race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, educational achievement, gender, sexual orientation, marital or parental status, age, disability, political or religious belief or socio-economic class. This policy sets out our intention to deliver services that are fair, accessible and do not contain any unnecessary barriers to entry.

British Language Centre hereafter known as 'the Test Centre', considers this policy to be central to its quality management and to ensuring candidates enjoy equality of access and provision.

Review Arrangements

We will review the policy annually and revise it when necessary in response to customer and candidate feedback, changes in our practices, actions from the regulatory authorities or external agencies, or changes in legislation.

The Test Centre will:

Ensure equality of treatment for all by aiming to:

- Raise awareness of equality and diversity.
- Ensure that our staff respect the policy in their dealings with all members of the the Test Centre's community and behave in a way which reflects and appreciates the diversity of the Test Centre's community.
- Ensure that you are never discriminated against or receive less favourable treatment because of a protective characteristic (a definition of protective characteristics can be found in Appendix 1).
- Acknowledge any issues that could be defined as discrimination, victimisation or harassment with an appropriately sensitive, fair and prompt investigation, and, where required, take appropriate action.
- Comply with LanguageCert in making suitable reasonable adjustments to ensure fair access to assessment for all candidates. LanguageCert's Reasonable Adjustment and Special Considerations Policy is available to view/download from the LanguageCert website.
- Ensure, through our marketing materials and presentations that our commitment to equality and diversity is understood by all stakeholders.
- Design programmes of learning to promote equal access.
- Advise candidates which courses and venues are the most suitable based upon our aim to provide the most suitable delivery of training to each individual.
- Ensure information obtained from candidates through, for example, learning reviews, candidate achievements, questionnaires, surveys and interviews will be anonymous and used to improve the equality of opportunity available.
- Ensure all candidates have an opportunity through, for example, course feedback and questionnaires to freely express personal views.



Your Responsibilities

Discrimination is not just treating one person less favourably than another. It can take place because:

- Someone associates with a person with a protected characteristic.
- Someone is believed to possess a protected characteristic (even though they do not).

The Test Centre expects you to make a positive contribution towards maintaining an environment of equal opportunity. Please ensure you observe this policy at all times and understand that you have an individual responsibility to adopt the following principles:

- Not to take unlawful discriminatory actions or decisions contrary to the spirit of this policy.
- Not to discriminate against, harass, abuse or intimidate anyone on account of their protected characteristics.
- Not to place pressure on any other candidates to act in a discriminatory manner.
- To resist pressure to discriminate that may be placed on you by others, and, to report any such instances to an appropriate member of staff.
- To co-operate when we investigate, including providing evidence of conduct which may amount to discrimination.
- To co-operate with any measures introduced to develop or monitor equal opportunity.
- To treat other candidates and the people our organisation deals with considerately and with respect.

What to do if you believe you have encountered discrimination

- If you feel subject to discrimination of any kind as identified within this policy, make clear to the individual concerned that you find it unacceptable. Person-to-person discussion at an early stage may be enough to resolve your concern without involving anyone else. Alternatively, seek the help of a trusted colleague (e.g. a fellow candidate or a trusted member of staff) and ask them to approach whoever has caused you offence.
- If discrimination continues, or you consider an instance to be particularly serious, you should consider who to highlight the issue with. For the majority of cases this will likely to be the Director of studies. If, however, this staff member may/is implicated in your concern, you should approach the secretary.
- The Test Centre will carry out a suitable, documented investigation into any alleged discrimination. All investigations will be handled promptly, sensitively and fairly and the result of the investigation will be communicated to you with information including the action taken and outcome highlighted if applicable or appropriate.

What do I do if I feel dissatisfied about the outcome of an investigation?

If you feel dissatisfied about the outcome of the investigation and want to appeal, then you should follow the process outlined in the Test Centre's Appeals Policy.



Appendix 1

Protected Characteristics

The following are protected characteristics:

- Age.
- Disability.
- Gender Reassignment.
- Marriage and Civil Partnership.
- Pregnancy and Maternity.
- Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin).
- Religion or Belief.
- Sex.
- Sexual Orientation.