

Equal Opportunities Policy



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1. Policy Statement

Our equal opportunities policy seeks to remove barriers to equality and promote concepts of diversity and equality of opportunity in all of its activities. We will work to eliminate unfair discrimination, redress imbalances and foster an ethos of equality and will continue to develop guidelines and codes of practice which will underline our commitment to the principle of equality.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to promote equality of opportunity for staff and students by ensuring that all academic, employment and other practices operate on the basis of the appropriate merits, qualifications, abilities and potential of individuals.

3. Objectives

To ensure that all applicants for employment with Accounting Technicians Ireland are treated fairly on the basis of their merits, abilities, qualifications and suitability for appointment and that appointment procedures do not discriminate on the basis of criteria which cannot be justified by the demands of the post.

To ensure that all employees are trained, appraised, given access relevant work experience, promoted, and otherwise treated on the basis of their relevant merits, qualifications, abilities and experience.

To ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities as tutors, examiners, authors, invigilators, managers and employees under the provisions of national legislation and the policies of Accounting Technicians Ireland.

To monitor and review employment policies and practices to ensure that they do not, directly or indirectly, discriminate unfairly against individual members of staff or particular groups of staff.

To ensure that applicants for admission as students of Accounting Technicians Ireland are treated fairly and in accordance with published policies and procedures.

To ensure that Accounting Technicians Ireland affords all students an equal opportunity to develop their full potential; the policies, procedures and practices of Accounting Technicians Ireland in relation to teaching, learning and examining will seek to ensure equality of opportunity for all students and, as far as is practicable, practices will conform with the published procedures of Accounting Technicians Ireland.

To promote a harmonious working environment for staff and students based on mutual respect within which staff and students are encouraged to develop their full potential in the interests of the individual.

To identify programmes of positive action within which these objectives can be achieved.

4. The Responsibilities of Accounting Technicians Ireland

The Board of Directors is responsible for the management and control of all the activities of Accounting Technicians Ireland, subject to the provisions of Accounting Technicians Ireland's regulations.

The Chief Operations Officer is responsible for ensuring that all employment policies and practices of Accounting Technicians Ireland reflect the provisions of national legislation and of Accounting Technicians Ireland's regulations and policies.

Accounting Technicians Ireland makes the following commitments to ensure the effectiveness of its policy on equality:

- To ensure that this policy is made known to all staff and students.
- To consult with staff where appropriate and practicable, on issues relating to equal opportunities and to encourage the involvement and commitment of the Accounting Technicians Ireland community to the promotion of equal opportunities.
- To provide information and training to enable staff to understand their responsibilities as set out in this policy, and as required by national legislation, and to provide support and guidance to enable staff to discharge these responsibilities.
- To review employment procedures and practices regularly to ensure that they continue to reflect and promote Accounting Technicians Ireland's policy on equal opportunities.
- To monitor the effectiveness of the policy and identify areas for action.
- To identify, develop and support positive action measures to ensure that all members of staff have an equal opportunity, and, where appropriate, encouragement, to obtain employment, promotion, and further education and training for personal and career development.
- To establish appropriate mechanisms whereby staff or job applicants who feel that they have been unfairly treated can have their complaints investigated.

Accounting Technicians Ireland will produce, and periodically review, guidelines and codes of practice on specific activities in order to ensure that practices throughout reflect the principles of this policy. Guidelines and codes of practice will apply to areas such as curriculum development, recruitment and selection, training and development, terms and conditions of employment of staff, flexible and work-life

balance policies, unbiased language, sexual harassment and bullying, and employment of persons with disabilities.

Accounting Technicians Ireland has established, and will review, mechanisms and procedures within which claims of unfair discrimination or harassment can be investigated and resolved.

5. Responsibility of Accounting Technicians Ireland to its Students

- Accounting Technicians Ireland will seek to ensure that all students are treated fairly and are afforded equal opportunities to develop their potential for learning and for personal development and will promote an environment which supports learning, where staff and students recognise and respect the rights of others, and which is free from harassment or bullying.
- The Education Board on behalf of the Board of Directors, is responsible for the development, approval and publication of academic regulations, procedures and practice in relation to the admission of students and to teaching, learning and assessment, and they will seek to ensure that such regulations, procedures and practices promote equal opportunities for all applicants and students and do not unfairly discriminate against individuals or particular groups of individuals.
- The Education Board on behalf of the Board of Directors is responsible for developing a code of behaviour for students and for the maintenance of discipline and good order and it will seek to ensure that the student code is observed and that disciplinary procedures are implemented with fairness and in accordance with the principles of natural justice.
- ATI staff will ensure that, as far as practicable, academic practices conform to the published regulations and procedures of Accounting Technicians Ireland and do not discriminate unfairly against individual student or groups of students.
- The welfare of students is a matter of concern to all members of the Accounting Technicians Ireland's community, particularly the welfare of students who may have academic, personal, medical or financial difficulties. As far as resources permit, the Education Board will appoint sufficient resources to provide professional support for students requiring reasonable accommodations.
- The Education Department will bring this policy to the attention of students and will publish it annually in the *Student Handbook*.

6. Responsibility of Staff

Individual members of the staff of Accounting Technicians Ireland have responsibilities as set out in this policy and in national legislation to avoid unfair discrimination against individuals or particular groups.

In particular, members of the staff –

- Should promote equal opportunities for staff and students, should recognise and respect the rights of other members of the Accounting Technicians Ireland community, and should contribute to the development of a harmonious environment for staff and students.
- Are required to co-operate with any measures introduced by Accounting Technicians Ireland to promote equal opportunities among staff and students.
- Must not, either directly or indirectly, discriminate unfairly against fellow employees, students or applicants for employment or admission.
- Must not prevail upon colleagues or students to practice unfair discrimination or to act in a way which is contrary to the spirit of this policy.

7. Responsibility of Students

In accordance with the principles of this policy, all students have a responsibility to respect the rights of staff and of other students, to promote equality of opportunity, and to contribute to the creation of an environment which is harmonious and free from unfair discrimination and harassment.

In particular, students have the following responsibilities –

- To observe the provisions of the Student Code, and the regulations of Accounting Technicians Ireland which are designed to promote fairness and integrity.

8. Access to Accounting Technicians Ireland

In regard to the design, development, assessment and award of qualifications, ATI will adhere to current Equality and Diversity legislation including the Equalities Act 2010 (UK & NI) and the Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2004 and other relevant EU directives.

ATI actively promotes equality and diversity in access and entitlement to its services regardless of gender, race, ethnic origin, nationality, marital status, religion, belief, disability, race or sexual orientation. ATI will take positive action to meet this commitment by ensuring its qualifications and assessments are free from barriers which restrict access to progression.

- Accounting Technicians Ireland is a member of AHEAD, Association for Higher Education Access and Disability which is an independent non-profit organisation working to promote full access to and participation in further and higher education for students with disabilities and to enhance their employment prospects on graduation.
- Accounting Technicians Ireland, in selecting applicants for admission to its courses and programmes, will observe the principles of equity and constitutional justice and will avoid unfair discrimination on the basis of gender, age, social background or other irrelevant considerations.
- In implementing its admissions policy, Accounting Technicians Ireland will seek to eliminate barriers to participation, to redress under-representation of the socially and economically disadvantaged and to promote equality of opportunity.
- It is the policy of Accounting Technicians Ireland, as far as practicable, to admit all applicants who fulfil the minimum academic requirements for its courses and programmes.
- Accounting Technicians Ireland recognises the qualifications and awards of other educational institutions, for the purpose of exemptions, subject to comparability of content and standard with the Diploma for Accounting Technicians.
- Accounting Technicians Ireland will ensure that the design of all new buildings and facilities will render them accessible to persons with disabilities and, as far as resources permit, will carry out such alterations to existing buildings and facilities as are required to make them accessible to all users.