



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

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1. POLICY STATEMENT

NIAB has a strong ethos of valuing inclusivity and encouraging diversity within our organisation and within the agri-food space. NIAB recognises the strength that comes from the skills, experience and commitment of a diverse workforce and the benefit this has on our company, our team and our stakeholders.

We are an equal opportunities employer and are fully committed to treating all our staff and job applications equally in every aspect of the employment lifecycle. We will take all reasonable steps to employ, train, develop and promote employees on the basis of their experience, abilities, qualifications, individual attributes and talent, eliminating any unintentional bias against Protected Characteristics. We will take all reasonable steps to provide a work environment in which all staff are treated with respect and dignity and that is free of harassment based upon any Protected Characteristics. We will not condone any form of harassment, whether engaged by staff or by outside third parties who do business with us, such as clients, customers and suppliers. We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. We are committed to making a flexible working environment and reasonable adjustments where possible for any employees that are experiencing difficulties in the workplace as a result of a protected characteristic.

This policy provides a framework of equality and fairness for all our staff members and sets out our desire to enhance and encourage inclusion and diversity in the workplace, outlining our approach from both a moral and legal standpoint to inclusion, diversity and the avoidance of discrimination at work.

2. DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions apply:

Employment lifecycle – includes all aspects of employment, such as: recruitment and selection, promotion, transfer, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, other terms of employment, discipline, selection for redundancy and dismissal.

Protected Characteristics – includes, but is not restricted to, race including ethnic origin or nationality, religion, political or other beliefs, sex, gender, sexual orientation, family status including pregnancy, maternity, paternity or other carer status, age, marriage and civil partnership, disability and any other characteristic in respect of which legal protection is afforded by local law.

Staff – includes all NIAB employees, students, consultants, contractors and representatives, whether full or part-time and those engaged on temporary, permanent or short-term contracts, including visiting scholars.

Inclusion and Diversity - Inclusion and diversity for the purposes of this policy means the creation of a respectful work environment in which people neither discriminate nor are discriminated against in any context on the basis of any Protected Characteristics.

3. DISCRIMINATION

You must not unlawfully discriminate against or harass other people, including current and former employees, job applicants, clients, customers, suppliers and visitors. This applies in

the workplace, outside the workplace (when dealing with customers, suppliers or other work-related contacts or when wearing a work uniform), and on work-related trips or events including social events.

The following forms of discrimination are prohibited under this policy and are unlawful:

- Direct discrimination – when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a Protected Characteristic.
- Associative discrimination or discrimination by association – direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a Protected Characteristic.
- Discrimination by perception – direct discrimination against someone because it is thought that they possess a particular Protected Characteristic even if they do not actually possess it.
- Indirect discrimination - occurs where an individual's employment is subject to an unjustified provision criterion or practice which e.g. one sex or race or nationality or age group finds more difficult to meet, although on the face of it the provision, criterion or practice is 'neutral'.
- Harassment – unwanted conduct related to a relevant Protected Characteristic which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual. You may complain of such offensive behaviour even if it is not directed towards you personally.
- Victimisation – when an employee is treated less favourably because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance about unlawful discrimination or are suspected of doing so.
- Disability discrimination: this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified unfavourable treatment because of something arising in consequence of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

4. SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff throughout the course of their dealings with us, including when they apply to work for us and after they cease working for us and covers all aspects of the employment lifecycle. This policy creates both rights to be enjoyed by our staff and responsibilities for those same people to behave in a similar manner to ensure that others enjoy those same rights.

Managers within NIAB will assume responsibility to give effect to inclusion and diversity and robustly and promptly address any conduct that breaches this policy of which they become aware.

5. OUR COMMITMENT

In order to meet the standards that we expect as a company in relation to our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion promise, we commit to the following:

- To follow the ACAS guidance in relation to improving Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the workplace.
- To engage in activities such as listening to our workforce, consulting with our employees and union representatives and encouraging discussion and feedback to monitor and enhance our initiatives on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

- To ensure that our policies and procedures are complimentary to encouraging and protecting an equal and diverse working environment for our staff, such as the Bullying and Harassment Policy, Grievance Policy, Research Integrity Policy, Preventing Harm (Safeguarding) Policy and Whistleblowing Policy.
- To ensure that our Executive Team and Senior Management act as company ambassadors to promote the principles of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, whilst assuring a diverse, equal and inclusive Executive Team.
- To ensure that equality information is collected and analysed on an annual basis and critically reviewed to ensure evidence led improvement.
- To maintain the initiatives developed as part of a doctoral training partnership through the UKRI strength in place to target underrepresented groups in order to increase diversity in agriscience.
- To regularly review our HR processes against best practice EDI approaches.
- To ensure that staff are supported by our Communications team to ensure that outward facing elements of work are mindful and communicate in an inclusive manner, to sections of the external stakeholder base.
- To ensure that an ethos of continuous improvement is embraced under our ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management Accreditation

a) Recruitment

NIAB's recruitment process will continue to be conducted in such a way as to result in the selection of the most suitable person for the job in terms of talent, relevant abilities, and qualifications. Recruitment publicity will aim to positively encourage applications from all suitably qualified individuals, appealing to applicants from diverse sections of the community.

Vacancies will be published to all employees in such a way that they do not restrict applications from employees with a particular Protected Characteristic. Reasonable flexibility and adjustments will be considered for all job vacancies and the contact details of the HR representative are given in the job advertisement. Applicants with a recognised disability will be assured that the company will make reasonable adjustments to work provisions, criteria and practices or to physical features of work premises or to provide auxiliary aids or services in order to ensure that the disabled person is not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with persons who are not disabled.

The selection process will be carried out consistently for all jobs at all levels. We will ensure that this policy is shared with all of our employees, and in particular is given to all staff with responsibility for recruitment, selection and promotion. Interviews will be conducted by a diverse interview panel of at least two interviewers.

All applications will be processed consistently. The staff responsible for short listing, interviewing and selecting candidates will be clearly informed of the selection criteria and of the need for their consistent application. Interview questions will be devised such that relate to the requirements of the job and will include a variety of assessments to understand the candidates full potential.

b) Training, Transfer and Promotion

We will take such measures as may be necessary to ensure the proper training, supervision and instruction for all line managers in order to familiarise them with our policy on equal opportunities. This will help them understand the ethos and values of

working within a diverse, multicultural workplace and identify discriminatory acts or practices to ensure that they promote equal opportunity within the departments for which they are responsible.

We will provide all employees with Unconscious Bias training to promote an understanding of the roots of stereotypes and prejudice to avoid this entering the workplace. In addition to this, we will review and address the Companies training needs in relation to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion on a regular basis. This may include providing both formal training or the distribution of educational information in this regard. We also commit to maintaining the existing leadership training programme for as long as possible, to support skills and talent at all levels of the business and continue to afford staff the opportunity to be self-selected or nominated for CPD courses.

All persons responsible for selecting new employees, employees for training or employees for transfer or promotion to other jobs will be instructed not to discriminate because of one or more of the Protected Characteristics. Where a promotional system is in operation, the assessment criteria will be examined to ensure that they are not discriminatory. The promotional system will be checked from time to time in order to assess how it is working in practice.

When a group of workers who predominantly have a particular Protected Characteristic appear to be excluded from access to promotion, transfer and training and to other benefits, our systems and procedures will be reviewed to ensure there is no unlawful discrimination.

c) Terms of employment, benefits, facilities and services

All terms of employment, benefits, facilities and service will be reviewed from time to time, in order to ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination on the grounds of one or more of the Protected Characteristics.

d) Equal pay and equality of terms

We are committed to equal pay in employment. We believe all employees, regardless of any protected characteristics, should receive equal pay for like work, work rated as equivalent or work of equal value. In order to achieve this, we will endeavour to maintain a pay system that is transparent, free from bias and based on objective criteria.

e) Disabilities

We encourage all members of staff to tell us if they are disabled or become disabled so that we can provide the appropriate support.

If a member of staff experiences difficulties at work because of their disability, they may wish to contact their line manager to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. Line managers may wish to consult with individuals and their medical adviser about possible adjustments. The company will consider the matter carefully and will make reasonable adjustments where necessary. If the company considers a particular adjustment would not be reasonable, the reasoning will be explained and an alternative solution sourced where possible.

NIAB will monitor the physical features of our premises to consider whether we might place anyone with a disability at a substantial disadvantage. Where necessary, we will

take reasonable steps to improve access.

6. EXPECTATIONS OF OUR STAFF

Our employees have a duty to co-operate with us to ensure that this policy is effective in maintaining our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion ethos. Action may be taken under our Disciplinary Procedure against any employee whose behaviour is believed to be in contradiction to this Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy.

Employees must not harass, bully or intimidate other employees for reasons related to one or more of the Protected Characteristics or any other reason. Such behaviour will be treated as potential gross misconduct under our Disciplinary Procedure. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may also be guilty of a criminal offence.

7. BREACHES OF THIS POLICY

Incidents of non-compliance with this policy or of any other conduct that affects inclusivity and diversity should be reported in-line with the companies Whistleblowing Policy. The company is committed to dealing promptly and thoroughly (and with as much confidentiality and sensitivity as is possible) with any such complaints.

The company will not tolerate any form of victimisation relating to any complaint made in good faith. Victimisation includes not only conduct directed at the complainant but also conduct directed at any other person involved in any related investigation.

We take a strict approach to breaches of this policy, which will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary Policy. Serious cases of deliberate discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal.