

EXCELLENCE THROUGH  
EDUCATION AND TRAINING

# Employment Equality Policy

Policy adopted by LOETB Board  
4 April 2016



## **Policy**

Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board, (LOETB), is committed to providing a working environment that is free of discrimination of any kind and to ensuring fairness and equity in matters of recruitment, promotion, terms and conditions of employment and access to training and development.

## **Purpose**

The policy sets out the commitment of LOETB to ensuring equality of opportunity for all staff and prospective staff in relation to employment and access to employment.

## **Scope**

This policy is applicable to all employees (temporary and permanent, whole-time and part-time) irrespective of length of service.

In accordance the provisions of the Employment Equality Acts, 1998 & 2004, LOETB has developed this policy and procedures which ensures that, in matters of employment, it does not discriminate directly or indirectly on the grounds of gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race or membership of the traveller community.

Specifically the Employment Equality Act prohibits discrimination, defined as the less favourable treatment of a person by comparison with another, on any of the nine grounds in respect of the following:

- Access to employment,
- Conditions of employment,
- Training or experience for or in relation to employment
- Promotion or regrading, or
- Classification of posts

Any form of discrimination, either direct or indirect, which impedes achievement of full equality of opportunity at work is not acceptable.

It is the responsibility of every member of staff to ensure that equality of opportunity for all is respected in the workplace.

It is the responsibility of the Human Resources Department to ensure that every member of staff is aware of her/his obligations under employment equality legislation.

LOETB will ensure that staff involved in recruitment and selection are briefed so that they are aware of employment equality legislation and its implications.

## **Recruitment & Selection**

Every applicant for employment with LOETB is assured that the only criteria for success in recruitment and selection are merit and ability in accordance with the requirements of the post. Similarly in the context of career progression and development, every member of staff will be afforded equal opportunity to compete for promotional posts and to develop her/his skills and talents.

All recruitment documentation including job descriptions, application forms and advertisements are designed so as to:

- Encourage applications from all suitably-qualified and experienced candidates
- Exclude any items of a discriminatory nature
- State explicitly LOETB's commitment to equality of opportunity.

In relation to selection, the interview board will, as far as is practicable, be gender balanced.

Interview boards will be formed in accordance with Department of Education and Skills guidelines and each member of an interview board will be furnished with a copy of LOETB's recruitment and selection policy which sets out the interview process including the requirement to avoid questions and statements which could be construed as discriminatory. The Chair of the interview board will ensure that the process is fair and equitable.

The interview board will guard against making assumptions about the suitability of candidates for types of work, based on personal or other criteria not relevant to the post.

The criteria used for assessment purposes are to be clearly specified and recorded for each competition.

All records in relation to the recruitment process are to be kept on file for two years before being discarded.

### **Training and Development**

Every member of staff is entitled to equal access to training and development as it arises during the course of her/his employment both in respect of on and off the job training.

Work assignments are to be arranged with a view to ensuring that all members of staff in a grade have an equal opportunity to carry out the full range of tasks, including the most demanding of the grade.

Assumptions by management regarding the suitability of certain types of work to a specific category may not be made. In addition, assumptions by management about future career intentions or family responsibilities that may adversely affect decisions in relation to a person's access to employment, training or work experience may not be made.

### **Promotions and Career Development**

All members of staff must be made aware of the career opportunities available in LOETB and encouraged to avail of them.

All vacancies will be advertised as required by Departmental Circulars or established agreements.

Principals/managers/coordinators will, as far as is reasonably practicable, ensure that every member of staff has equal access to relevant training and work experience so that s/he is adequately equipped to compete for posts which arise.

## **Work and Family Responsibilities**

LOETB affirms its commitment to providing family friendly working arrangements such as job-sharing, career breaks, and flexible working hours in so far as this is practicable and can be accommodated without adversely impacting on service delivery.

All members of staff are made aware of the initiatives available to them, including career breaks, job-sharing schemes, flexible working times, part-time work etc.

Members of staff who wish to avail of these working arrangements should discuss the matter with their principal/manager/coordinator, who will, subject to the needs of the particular service, ensure that those wishing to do so, are accommodated within the confines of maintaining the service.

## **Employment of Persons with Disabilities**

In the context of employment, the term “persons with disabilities”, means persons with:

- The total or partial absence of mental or bodily functions, including the absence of a part of a person’s body.
- The presence in the body of organisms causing, or likely to cause, chronic disease or illness.
- The malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of part of a person’s body.
- A condition or malfunction which results in a person learning differently from a person without the condition or malfunction or
- A condition, illness or disease which affects a person’s thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment or which results in disturbed behaviour
- It includes a disability which exists at present, or which previously existed but no longer exists, or which may exist in the future or which is imputed to a person.
- A physical, sensory or psychological impairment which may have a tangible impact on their functional capability to do a particular job or have an impact on their ability to function in a particular physical environment and lead to discrimination in obtaining or keeping employment of a kind for which they would otherwise be suited.

LOETB is committed to the principle of equal opportunities for persons with a disability and in particular, is committed to ensuring:

- A person with a disability who is capable of effective performance in the job to which s/he aspires or which s/he holds is not disadvantaged by reason of having a disability.
- That all reasonable efforts are made to meet the special requirements to which some disabilities give rise so as to maximise access to employment in LOETB for persons with disabilities and to enable staff with disabilities to make the fullest possible contribution to the work of LOETB.

LOETB will strive to fulfil the Government objective of achieving a 3% quota for employment of persons with a disability where this can be accomplished with due regard for the exigencies of the service.

A person with a disability is entitled to apply for any post in LOETB for which s/he is qualified and to have her/his application considered on the basis of her/his abilities, qualifications, and suitability for the work in question.

LOETB is required to ensure that a person selected for appointment is in good health and that her/his disability does not impede her/him carrying out the duties of the post. The selection decision is, therefore, based on objective considerations (normally medical advice).

The following guidelines will apply in relation to recruitment:

- No unnecessary or irrelevant obstacle will be placed in the way of people with disabilities applying for posts in LOETB
- LOETB will make all reasonable efforts to provide facilities and equipment as are necessary to enable applicants with disabilities to compete for posts for which they would otherwise be suited.
- Interview boards will be briefed on disability awareness and employment equality issues
- In supplying information on the duties of posts, care will be taken to avoid specifying inessential requirements which could have the effect of excluding people with disabilities.

Where LOETB forms an opinion that a candidate is unable, by virtue of a disability, to properly perform the duties of the post, the candidate will be afforded an opportunity to respond to that opinion before a final decision is made.

Where a person with a disability is appointed, the principal/manager/coordinator of the relevant service should be fully acquainted with the appointee's circumstances and should be involved in discussions regarding any special measures which may be required.

While it is appreciated that some staff with disabilities may not be able to undertake all the duties of posts in her/his grade, every effort should be made to afford her/him the same opportunities as other staff to broaden her/his experience through staff mobility arrangements.

Some LOETB buildings were not designed to promote ease of access for people with disabilities but in so far as it has been practicable, LOETB has made significant structural alterations to provide and maintain ease of access for those with disabilities.

Principals/managers/coordinators should adopt a positive approach to reasonable requests for special adaptive equipment which may enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of a staff member with a disability in performing her/his duties where the cost of such request is not disproportionate and/or where grant aid is available.

Principals/Managers/Coordinators will identify staff members with special needs and with regard to health and safety in her/his area of responsibility, make appropriate arrangements for their evacuation during emergencies.

**Review**

This policy will be subject to review in 2019 and/or where it is necessary to do so due to changes in Department of Education and Skills regulations, legislation or other such situations.