

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

DCA strives to be an equal opportunities organisation and welcomes diversity. We will not discriminate on the basis of race, colour, ethnicity, national origin, gender, disability, sexual orientation or identity, marital status, HIV or AIDS status, home responsibility, age, political or religious belief, and reserve the right to add to these groups at any time.

DCA will seek to prevent unfavourable treatment, directly or indirectly, to any of these groups in its employment practice, its governance structure and its service delivery. In the composition of its workforce and the composition and operation of the DCA Board, DCA will seek to achieve the broadest representation of the community in which it works, and society as a whole.

This policy applies to the treatment of prospective employees, existing employees, volunteers, DCA's trustees and all other stakeholders/clients.

DCA will monitor the composition of its work force and Board and may take positive steps, as appropriate, if this policy and procedure is not effective.

1. EMPLOYMENT

All individuals will be selected and treated on the basis of their relevant merits, skills and abilities. This principle will apply to recruitment, promotion, training and development.

In order to carry out the recruitment process, DCA will:

- Strive to provide development opportunities for existing staff by attempting to advertise new posts internally in the first instance and encouraging applications from the existing staff team. Existing staff will be required to complete an application form, meet the requested criteria and undertake a formal interview before being appointed to a new post. If no appointments can be made by this method, or if other factors mean that DCA is not able to advertise posts internally in the first instance, then the new posts may be advertised externally.
- Use a standard application form.
- Ensure that short listing and interviewing is conducted objectively by at least two people, using the same criteria.
- Ensure that interviewers take part in the short listing process, whenever possible.
- Ensure that information on ethnicity, gender, age and disability will be sought for monitoring purposes, and for the purposes of addressing any imbalance, on a separate form. This information will not be identifiable by name and will not be used as a basis for short listing.

2. TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

In order to ensure effective implementation of its Equal Opportunities Policy, DCA will:

- Strive to raise awareness of equal opportunities issues amongst staff and trustees.
- Undertake an annual survey relating to the skills, interests and experience of staff and trustees.

- Ensure that DCA's commitment to training and development is incorporated in budgets and within the Corporate Plan

3. **SERVICE DELIVERY**

DCA will strive to ensure that its work and the services it offers are accessible and follow equal opportunities principles.

In order to ensure this happens, DCA will:

a) **Events**

In organising events such as conferences, seminars and training days, DCA recognises the need to be as inclusive as possible

DCA will, in the best interests of the organisation:

- Ensure delegated training providers are issued with DCA's Ground Rules handout
- Choose a venue that is geographically accessible and served by public transport, where possible
- Choose a venue that is accessible to wheelchair users and others with specific needs, where possible
- Choose a venue that takes account of dietary needs, where possible
- Invite feedback from delegates and take the results into consideration when planning future events
- Ensure the debriefing of major events to assess effectiveness and feed into future planning requirements.

b) **Publications and Written Information**

To ensure that written information and publications reflect DCA's commitment to equal opportunities and diversity, DCA will, in the best interests of the organisation:

- Monitor reports and other written material for equal opportunities considerations (such as language, images, font size and type, glare, etc)
- Reproduce written material into other formats eg large print, on request, whenever possible
- Use non-offensive language in all documents
- Use diverse illustrations (age, gender, race).

c) **Accessibility of Grants**

In the awarding of grants, DCA is committed to transparency in the decision making process and to straightforward monitoring and feedback.

DCA will:

- Determine clearly understood criteria and communicate these in an appropriate and accessible format
- Use a representative panel to determine applications
- Make public the reasons for grant decisions
- Ensure any evaluation or monitoring demands are simple, logical and easily and cheaply adhered to by successful applicants
- Monitor the grant awarding process on a yearly basis to ensure awards are being fairly distributed and to raise awareness of any take-up trends.

5. Monitoring

All job applicants and trustees will be asked to complete an equal opportunities monitoring form. This form will only be used for the purposes of monitoring the effectiveness of its Equal Opportunities Policy. Monitoring forms will be separated from recruitment application forms before short listing takes place and will not form part of the short listing process.

DCA will also monitor various aspects of its service delivery.

6. Positive Action

The composition of DCA's workforce and the DCA Board will be monitored on a regular basis. Should inequalities become apparent, positive action may be taken, in the best interests of the organisation, to redress the imbalance, wherever possible, including such measures as:

- i) Advertising in specific interest publications, as appropriate
- ii) Encouraging under-represented groups to apply for suitable positions, by publicly stating the imbalance
- iii) DCA will endeavour, where possible, to make reasonable adjustments requested by disabled applicants for employment and trusteeship in order to overcome any disadvantage they feel they may have compared to other individuals, as a result of their disability.

7. Dealing with incidences of discrimination

- i) Staff who feel that they have been discriminated against may use the grievance procedure.
- ii) Trustees who feel they have been discriminated against may use the complaints procedure.
- iii) The Disciplinary Procedure may be used in cases of staff breaching the Equal Opportunities Policy.