



Policy
Equal Opportunities, Fair Access and Diversity
Version: 3

Summary:	The Institute of Fire Safety Managers (IFSM) policy on equal opportunities, fair access and diversity. It includes guidance and procedures to be followed to ensure a culture of inclusiveness and fairness.	
Target Audience:	Staff, Council, Members, Non-Members, Contractors, Candidates & Delegates.	
Next Review Date:	November 2027	
Approved by:	Management Team	31/10/24
Ratified by:	Council	14/11/24
Date issued:	December 2019	

1. Introduction

The IFSM is dedicated to fostering an environment that respects and embraces diversity across its membership and services. As an organisation supporting individuals and organisations in fire safety, the Institute recognises the unique value each member brings and emphasises a culture of inclusiveness, fairness, and openness.

This Policy and Procedure document is established under the By-Laws of the Institute of Fire Safety Managers (IFSM) to ensure equal opportunities, fair access and diversity are integrated into all aspects of the Institute's operations, in alignment with relevant legislation, including the Equality Act 2020 (Amendment) Regulations 2023.

2. Responsibility

The Institute's Council has overall responsibility for ensuring this policy complies with our regulatory and ethical obligations, and that all those under its control comply with it.

The management team have day-to-day responsibility for implementing this policy, monitoring its use and effectiveness, dealing with any queries about it, and auditing internal control systems and procedures to ensure they are effective.

Management at all levels are responsible for ensuring those reporting to them understand and comply with this policy.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all members, employees, contractors, council officials, volunteers, applicants, candidates & delegates and any other individual or company affiliated with the Institute. It should be read alongside the following Institute policies:

- Reasonable Adjustments & Special Considerations Policy
- Maladministration and Malpractice Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Appeals Policy
- Ethics Policy

4. Principles

Diversity, equal opportunities, and fair access are essential principles for creating inclusive environments that respect individual differences and provide everyone with fair opportunities to succeed.

4.1. Diversity encompasses the broad range of characteristics that make people unique, such as race, gender, culture, abilities, and life experiences, the Institute encourages the differences they can bring to the Institute.

4.2. Equal Opportunities focuses on ensuring that no one is disadvantaged or excluded due to specific characteristics. The Institute promotes fairness and strives to give everyone the same chances for success. It will not tolerate discrimination, whether it is direct or indirect, on the following grounds:

- Age
- Ability
- Culture
- Disability whether physical or mental
- Domestic circumstances
- Economic circumstances
- Employment status
- Gender reassignment
- Marital/civil partnership status
- Nationality
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Political persuasion
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Social background
- Any other grounds or status

4.2.1. Direct discrimination is defined as an individual or a group being treated less favourably than another individual or group because of a characteristic.

4.2.2. Indirect discrimination is defined as where a rule, policy or practice is applied to everyone but gives rise to a particular disadvantage or advantage to people who share a characteristic.

4.3. Fair Access relates to removing barriers that limit individuals' opportunities to access resources, services, or roles, ensuring everyone, regardless of background or circumstances, can participate equitably. The Institute will ensure equal and fair access to all its products and services.

5. Actions

The Institute will actively promote this Policy through the following actions:

5.1. Providing easy and accessible information regarding our products and services ensuring they are easily accessible and are provided in differing formats as required so that they can be accessed and understood without ambiguity.

5.2. Equal treatment of applications ensuring that all applicants who meet the basic criteria are treated equally and impartially. All those involved in application processes will sign and abide by the Institute's Impartiality Agreement.

5.3. Applying clear, intelligible and defined criteria consistently to ensure no unintended bias or discrimination is introduced into the system. Where required, additional guidance will be provided to help further, e.g. reading lists, signposting to further information, meanings of acronyms.

5.4. Providing clear reasoning for mandatory elements within applications, units or qualifications so as not to preclude an individual or individuals who share a particular characteristic from participating where there is no clear rationale for making the element mandatory. Requirement for prior knowledge, experience and/or qualifications will be limited to those essential to achievement what is being applied for.

5.5. Periodic reviews of policies and processes to ensure no unintended direct or indirect discrimination is introduced that precludes an individual or individuals who share a particular characteristic from participating

5.6. Taking action when made aware of practice that could lead or has led to discrimination and put in place mechanisms to minimise the impact and ensure it does not occur again.

5.7. Keep records of non-conformances and notify other organisations where applicable i.e. awarding bodies or regulators to ensure further actions are not required to minimise the impact or reduce reoccurrences.

5.8. Providing reasonable adjustments and special considerations to candidates as required and where they are justifiable. Ensuring procedures are in line with third parties where applicable i.e. Awarding bodies and regulators.

5.9. Policy Enforcement taking appropriate action against any person found to be in breach of this Policy in line with the Institute's disciplinary procedures.

Version Control

Change Record

Date	Author	Version	Page	Reason for Change
09/03/22	H Hilton	2	ALL	Updated to house style only
31/10/24	H Hilton	3	ALL	Rewritten to include Equality Act 2020, given more clarity on Equal Opportunities, and Diversity and to specifically include Fair Access. Actions expanded to incorporate all IFSM products, processes and services. Doc No changed from PF007.

Reviewers/contributors

Name	Position	Version Reviewed & Date
HH	Business Manager	V2 - 09/03/22
HH, DW, RK	Management Team	V3 - 31/10/24