



EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Equal Opportunities in Employment

Step Ahead is committed to preventing discrimination in its employment practices by stimulating genuine equality of opportunity. In order for us to continually monitor the application of our Equal Opportunities Policy, we ask all our candidates to complete our Equal Opportunities Monitoring form at the time of registration.

Step Ahead aims to develop, promote and deliver its services, information and employment opportunities without discriminating on the basis of any aspect of an individual's background or heritage which is used as justification for unfair treatment.

Step Ahead opposes all discrimination on the grounds of colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin or religious beliefs. We are keen to promote good relations in the Community by providing a non-discriminatory service.

We actively deter discrimination on the grounds of sex and counter discrimination against men and women in all employment practices, recognising the demands of child care and the care of other dependants.

Step Ahead ensure that lesbians and gay men will be given the same priority for all jobs as applicants from other groups who are represented in the company.

Disabled applicants will not be barred from selection on the grounds of disability unless arrangements for working with or around the disability cannot reasonably be made.

We value people for their competencies and age is not a consideration when selecting our candidates.

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Step Ahead is firmly committed to diversity in all areas of its work and we recognise that we have much to learn and profit from diverse cultures and perspectives; we believe that diversity will make our organisation more effective in meeting the needs of all our clients and candidates.

Step Ahead actively promotes equal opportunities. This applies in the recruitment, selection, training and promotion of all grades of staff employed by the Company and amongst those who use our services – both candidates and employer clients. Promoting equality of opportunity means that everyone is treated solely on the basis of competence and merit, regardless of age, gender, marital status, ethnic, racial or religious or disability considerations, or any other protected status.

All employees are made fully aware that discriminatory acts are treated as gross misconduct. We draw all employees to the Race Relations Codes of Practice and that of the Equal Opportunities Commission, both of which have specific guidance for employment agencies. The relevant sections of the Codes are reproduced as part of this policy and all staff are expected to comply with them.

1. Recruitment, Training and Development

- 1.1. All recruitment and selection, whether internal or external, will be conducted on a non-discriminatory basis and monitored by the Manager.
- 1.2. All training and development services will be planned and executed on a non-discriminatory basis and made available to as many employees as possible.
- 1.3. All promotions will be on a non-discriminatory basis.
- 1.4. No vacancies circulated to employees will contain any directly or indirectly discriminatory statements.
- 1.5. Training in recruitment, selection and appraisal will be provided as widely as possible.
- 1.6. All recruitment materials including application forms will be designed to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity.
- 1.7. Appraisals are intended to form the basis of employee development
- 1.8. Any ability or psychometric testing used in recruitment and selection will be free of bias
- 1.9. Monitoring of recruitment, selection and promotion will be undertaken to assess the success of the policy.

2. Terms and Conditions of Employment

- 2.1. Whilst these may be different for different employees, they will be designed to reflect the policy and to promote it.
- 2.2. All terms and conditions will be continuously reviewed to ensure their alignment with the policy.
- 2.3. Wherever possible, working patterns will be “family friendly”.
- 2.4. The implementation of employment policies that are attractive to people returning to work will be given high priority.

3. Operating Step Ahead’s Service to Candidates and Employer Clients

- 3.1. All dealings with employer clients and job candidates will be conducted in accordance with the Equal Opportunities Policy, as well as the law, and monitored by the manager.
- 3.2. All job vacancies and temporary assignments from employer clients will be accepted and handled on a non-discriminatory basis only.
- 3.3. Appropriate measures will be taken to bring the Policy to the attention of employers, clients and candidates in written communication with them.
- 3.4. All advertising, marketing and promotional material will reflect the Policy.
- 3.5. All pre-selection methods will reflect the Policy.
- 3.6. Step Ahead employees must not make remarks, either verbal or written, which could result in direct or indirect discrimination.

4. Breach of the Policy

- 4.1. Any apparent breach of the Policy by an employee will be dealt with through the Disciplinary Procedure.
- 4.2. Proven discrimination will be treated as gross misconduct.