



EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

1. Purpose

This policy explains Jobsplus position with respect to its training provision and inclusion of all learners, including commitments to multiculturalism, non-discrimination and the identification and support of learners with specific learning needs.

2. Applicability

This policy applies to every person applying for and attending a Jobsplus course. The training services management team has the overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy. All workers (including Training Coordinators, Training Design and Quality Assurance team, persons manning the reception and trainers) at the training services are responsible for the success of this policy and must ensure that they follow it.

3. Terminology

Direct discrimination is “when a person is treated less favourably than another person is, has been or would be, treated in a comparable situation” as per the *European Union Act – Equal treatment of Persons Order, 2007 (Chapter 460)*.

Indirect discrimination is “when an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice would put a person at a particular disadvantage compared with other persons, unless that provision, criterion or practice is objectively justified by a legitimate aim and the means of achieving that aim are appropriate and necessary” as per the *European Union Act – Equal treatment of Persons Order, 2007 (Chapter 460)*.

4. Related Legislation and local documentation

This policy document aligns with the respective Maltese legislation and local policies, namely: The Equality for Men and Women Act, 2003 (Chapter 456); Equal Opportunities Act (Persons with Disability) Act, 2000 (Chapter 413); Employment and Training Services Act, 2019 (Chapter 594); European Union Act – Equal treatment of Persons Order, 2007 (Chapter 460); A Policy on Inclusive Education in Schools - Route to Quality Inclusion; Language education policy profile; A national inclusive educational framework; Trans gender variant and intersex students in schools’ policy; Equal Treatment of Persons Order In Relation To Race/Ethnic Origin (LN 2017); Access to Goods and Services and their Supply (Equal Treatment) Regulations (LN 2008) and Malta Further and Higher Education Authority referencing report (2016)



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5. Policy

It is Jobsplus' responsibility to provide training courses to assist persons in their upskilling and reskilling to find employment. Jobsplus obtains information from employers regarding the number, educational level, skills and aptitudes of persons they may require for employment both in the short term and in the long term.

Inclusive education is recognized as a basic human right. Jobsplus is committed to ensuring a safe, accessible and culturally responsive learning environment for all learners coming from diverse and unique backgrounds, including learners whose first language is not Maltese or English. It is Jobsplus' policy not to discriminate against students on any grounds protected by law (including but not limited to gender, sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, race, religion or belief, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, age and pregnancy) and to promote best practice in equality, diversity and inclusion. Jobsplus also commits to identifying barriers to learning and, where reasonably practicable, implementing appropriate support and adjustments for learners with specific learning needs and/or disabilities across learning, teaching and assessment. Jobsplus aims to offer equal opportunities to all students through a student-centred approach that supports each learner to achieve their full potential.

5.1 Admission

To enhance accessibility, different routes for course enrolment are available. Registration for a course can be done through the Employment advisor, at the Jobsplus' Training Complex, online, via e-mail or by telephone. The process of student admission to a Jobsplus course is based on the student's academic achievements and relevant work experience. There are instances where persons who do not meet the entry requirements are invited to sit for a pre-course assessment. All information about course admission is publicly available in a transparent manner on the Jobsplus website. Courses are offered free of charge and all year round to everyone residing legally in Malta within the working age population. At the registration stage, students are asked to provide information about any specific learning needs or disabilities to provide them with the necessary support which would enable them to make the most out of their training.

Recruitment of teaching staff is based on personal merit (experience and qualifications) and interview performance, with no bias at all stages of the recruitment process. Teaching staff are provided with induction training on the procedures of training at Jobsplus, schemes available and their responsibilities. All teaching staff are presented with a contract together with the i) Equality and Diversity policy and the ii) Continuing Professional Development Policy.



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5.2 Training Material

All training material is reviewed by the Training Design and Quality Assurance (TDQA) unit to ensure that it is written in plain, clear and accessible language, is culturally sensitive and appropriately reflects the diversity of Jobsplus learners (including non-Maltese learners) and does not include stereotypes or discriminatory content. Where applicable, materials are provided in Maltese and/or English (or supported through appropriate classroom strategies) in a manner understood by the entire class. Training material is updated as necessary based on the trainer's experience and learners' feedback to respond effectively to learners' needs, including specific learning needs, and to support an inclusive learning environment through Universal Design for Learning principles.

5.3 Student support

Learners are provided with all the support possible from Jobsplus staff to facilitate their learning experience, including support that is sensitive to multicultural/linguistic needs and responsive to specific learning needs.

The support available to students before attending a course varies according to the circumstances. Jobsplus strives to develop a conducive learning environment for all learners to ensure that their learning needs are accommodated. Jobsplus offers free transport from Floriana to Hal Far and from Hal Far to Floriana both before and after the course. Employment Advisors hold one-to-one meetings with prospective trainees to help them determine the line of work which best suits their needs and help them decide which course they need to follow to obtain the required skills that will help them find employment. The Training Coordinators provide all the information required and answer any students' queries. The trainee handbook can be found on the Jobsplus website - <https://jobsplus.gov.mt/full-course-list#>. This handbook includes the rights and responsibilities of all those who are following a Jobsplus course. Jobsplus believes that every student can contribute with a mix of strengths, weaknesses, experiences, and qualities within the learning environment. Jobsplus strives to nurture a collaborative culture and increase the sense of belonging by providing students with the opportunity to express themselves through open discussions and sharing of experiences in any given course. By allowing students the space and independence to express essential values of their identity respectfully, a safe and inclusive environment is created that promotes the student's success and well-being.

With respect to specific learning needs (SLN), Jobsplus recognises that some learners may experience barriers to learning and/or assessment due to factors such as learning difficulties (e.g. literacy or numeracy needs, dyslexia), attention or executive functioning needs, communication



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needs, sensory needs, or mental health and well-being considerations. Learners are encouraged to disclose any SLN as early as possible (ideally at registration stage) so that support can be planned in a timely manner. Any information shared is treated with due confidentiality and is processed only on a need-to-know basis for the purpose of providing support. Where an SLN is identified, the Training Coordinator, in consultation with the TDQA Unit and the trainer, will discuss with the learner what reasonable adjustments and/or support measures are appropriate and feasible, while ensuring that the intended learning outcomes and the required standards of the course remain unchanged. Depending on the nature of the need, support may include (but is not limited to) adapted learning materials (e.g. clearer layout, larger font, step-by-step instructions), additional guidance or scaffolding during learning activities, alternative ways for the learner to demonstrate achievement during formative tasks, assistive technology, additional time, rest breaks, or a quieter setting. Where specialised support is required, Jobsplus may request appropriate documentation (e.g. a recent report by a licensed educational psychologist) and may liaise with relevant services/partners to facilitate the support required.

For persons with physical disabilities or impairments, the Corporation's Training Complex is equipped with easy access to all rooms. Jobsplus tries to eliminate barriers within learning environments by considering alternative educational routes by being flexible and responsive to the trainees' educational needs. Jobsplus has its Occupational Therapists within the Inclusive Employment Services Unit who assist trainees in their learning as necessary. Jobsplus works in partnership with the Lino Spiteri Foundation which offers several services to persons with disabilities. Eligible persons include (but are not limited to); Intellectual disability, Physical Disability, Sensory Impairment and Mental Health difficulties. In addition, Jobsplus collaborates with FITA (Foundation for Information Technology and Accessibility) to support disabled individuals in overcoming barriers during training and employment through assistive technology. Furthermore, Jobsplus can refer trainees to make use of the ACTU (Access to Communication and Technology Unit) within Agenzija Sappport to assist disabled individuals with complex communication needs and those requiring alternative access to technology. Technical support is also provided to ensure that adequate resources are available at the Training Complex and during online classes.

Language teaching and learning is an essential part of social policy in Europe. Jobsplus offers Maltese and English courses at different levels. This enables students whose first language is not Maltese or English to integrate better into society by providing them with basic knowledge of these languages. Offering Maltese language courses helps students acquire a sense of Maltese identity while English courses provide students with 'near-universal' knowledge since it is an international language. Due to the growing presence of migrant students following Jobsplus courses, both teachers and pupils employ extensive English Maltese code-switching in the classroom. Maltese culture orientation



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videos are also available to all European students through the following EURES link <https://www.eures.com/mt/index.php/eures-media> for free.

5.4 Assessments

The assessment methodology of different courses varies depending on the MQF level and learning objectives to be achieved. Assessments can be summative or formative and can take various formats, including written, hands-on, presentations, discussions or placement. The placement module is included in some of the Jobsplus courses and offers the students with an opportunity for hands-on learning through work experience. The arrangements are fair, providing a comparable experience opportunity for each student.

The placement equips students with both hard and soft skills. During the placement module, Jobsplus staff act as the administrator and coordinates the placement between the student and the placement provider. Jobsplus monitors the students during their placement through visits carried out and if required acts as a mediator in issues arising between the student and the placement provider. During visits, students are also monitored to assess them and ensure that both Jobsplus and the placement provider are providing adequate resources to reach the respective course learning outcomes in a safe environment. Visits during placement also aim for Jobsplus staff to keep updated with the latest developments in that sector and revises the courses accordingly.

The provider is expected to ensure that the student is familiar with its regulations and procedures and provide a safe learning environment in accordance with the Occupational Health and Safety Authority Act. The provider is also to ensure that students' well-being is safeguarded by providing an environment free from discrimination while allowing Jobsplus staff to carry out monitoring visits. On the other hand, the students are expected to follow the regulations and procedures of the provider, respect the timetable as agreed with the provider and carry out related tasks entrusted to them as part of their training.

The assessment criteria of a course are designed to be as inclusive as possible and applied fairly and consistently to all learners. Jobsplus explores other forms of arrangements for those persons who have a disability and/or specific learning needs to accommodate such needs, while keeping in line with the assessment criteria and ensuring comparability of standards. Such arrangements may include the allocation of extra time, the use of a computer for the written component, the use of assistive technology through ACTU or FITA, conducting the written assessment orally or allowing the assistance of a Learning Support Educator (LSE). In the latter case, the student is to present a



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report from a licensed educational psychologist and the services rendered by the LSEs are paid for by Jobsplus. Such a request should be made towards the beginning of the course so that it gives the TDQA unit enough time to prepare a specific assessment and/or make the necessary amendments (while maintaining the same level of difficulty of assessments) to facilitate such trainees during their assessment.

Training design is aligned with the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority standards and regulations but strives for flexible and sensitive content in relation to learning outcomes and assessment.

6. Breaches of the Policy

If the student feels that the principle of equal treatment within the scope of this policy has not been applied to them and hence, they have been disadvantaged on any of the unlawful grounds outlined, the student has a right to raise the matter in writing to the respective coordinator specifying the details and attaching any relevant information or by filing a complaint online (<https://jobsplus.gov.mt/help-hub>). If after investigation it is proven that the learner suffered committed acts of discrimination, the necessary disciplinary action will be taken. On the other hand, if false allegations of a breach of this policy are found to have been made in bad faith, the student will be subject to appropriate corrective action. Jobsplus will take a strict approach to serious breaches of this policy.

7. Conclusion

Inclusive education is a continuous developmental process. When new barriers to learning are identified, Jobsplus tries to provide the appropriate support to mitigate the difficulties encountered by students, thus creating a nurturing and inclusive environment, which supports learning for all. Feedback and suggestions received from all Jobsplus stakeholders together with other data that is collected and analysed are crucial to identifying areas for improvement and enhancing Jobsplus services.