City&Guilds Group

Inclusion and Diversity Content Guide

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Our Pledge

The City & Guilds Group is committed to improving diversity and inclusion within the way we work, and in how we deliver our purpose; helping people and organisations develop the skills they need for economic success and growth.

We are actively pursuing, implementing and reviewing working practices that enable a diverse and inclusive business strategy and working environment that is truly representative and supportive of our colleagues, customers and communities. We believe differences should be respected and valued. We are working towards a culture that enables colleagues and those we work with to be themselves and are supported to meet their full potential and deliver their best work. We know that building a diverse and inclusive workforce will result in highly engaged colleagues, improved service for our customers and greater impact of our purpose.

This guide aims to provide guidance for City & Guilds staff and associates, to ensure our content is as inclusive, diverse and representative as possible. This is a 'live' document, so these guidelines will be reviewed annually; evolving as our society progresses.

Our values

◆ **Inspire:** We inspire each other to work together to achieve our purpose.

◆ **Improve:** We put our curiosity to work to understand our difference and improve performance – for our customers and our colleagues.

◆ **Achieve:** We recognise and celebrate achievement and empower every colleague whatever their background and experience to develop and grow.

◆ **Trust:** We hold ourselves and our colleagues accountable: to focus, to plan, to deliver and to make decisions effectively.

How and when to use this guide

This guide is aimed at people who produce any content for or on behalf of the City & Guilds Group. This includes training programmes, assessment materials, marketing content etc.

People in such roles should familiarise themselves with this guide and refer to it whenever they produce content.

Protected Characteristics

Definitions for the protected characteristics used within this guide are from the Equality and Human Rights Commission. The UK Equality Act 2010 provides a framework of protection for individuals from nine protected characteristics against all forms of direct and indirect discrimination.

Please note that this guidance is based on UK legislation (applicable to England, Wales and Scotland; separate legislation applies in Northern Ireland) and so is primarily relevant for customers and audiences in the UK. Employees from other geographies are encouraged to refer to the content as a foundation for creating other guides more applicable to those locations and cultural approaches.

Age

A person belonging to a particular age group.

Age discrimination can be targeted towards individuals of any age. Although most discrimination is targeted towards older people, young people can also be affected. When producing content on work and employment, we need to be mindful of the legal protections against age discrimination.

For example, retirement age is chosen by the individual and only in particular circumstances can the employer impose retirement. References to age limits when describing employment should also be mindful of legal protections; only in cases of legitimate business need can an employer impose age-based recruitment limits.

Inclusive language regarding age is important, for instance avoid general terms to describe age groups e.g. 'the elderly' or 'the young', instead use terms which describe the individual e.g. 'mature person' or 'young person'. Avoid language which implies certain age groups are more or less able, e.g. 'a young dynamic team' could be rephrased as 'a dynamic team'.

Avoid making assumptions and reinforcing stereotypes based on age, e.g. 'an elderly customer with poor IT skills'.

Disability

A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

When representing disability in content, as with other protected characteristics, use inclusive language. Some phrasing is outdated as it is now considered offensive and fails to reflect the individuality and dignity of people living with disabilities e.g. 'handicapped'. For example, use 'person with a disability' or 'people with disabilities' rather than 'disabled people', 'the disabled' or 'disableds' as descriptors.

It is also important to avoid negative phrasing to describe disabled individuals e.g. 'Sarah suffers from X'. A more positive/neutral expression would be 'Sarah has X'. Avoid language which diminishes the experiences of people living with disabilities, such as the use of the term 'able-bodied': instead use 'non-disabled'.

Accessibility of language

Accessible language helps to make content inclusive for all – individuals with learning difficulties in particular.

◆ Avoid unnecessarily complex language structure and sentences.

◆ Only use technical language when in subject-specific context.

◆ Be concise e.g. instead of 'adds up to' use 'equals'.

◆ Use active sentences where possible, e.g. 'The electrician connected the mains' rather than passive forms, e.g. 'The mains were connected by the electrician'. Active sentences are often clearer, shorter and easier to understand.

◆ With all content, use plain English, consider the audience, and adapt language accordingly.

Font and typography

The recommended fonts for content are Arial and Avenir at 11 to 14-point size. Serif fonts such as Times New Roman should be avoided as they can be harder to read. This is to promote neurodiversity and to maximise the legibility of text for all, particularly for individuals with learning difficulties such as dyslexia.

Other key considerations:

◆ Keep line length as brief as necessary.

◆ Make sure there is spacing between lines.

◆ Check that spaces between words are consistent, e.g. avoid using justified formatting which can make spaces between words uneven.

Black text on white background should be preferred, as other colour combinations such as white on black or red on blue are particularly hard to read.

Colour

The use of colour in content can be an accessibility issue for visually impaired individuals, including those affected by red-green colour blindness. To improve accessibility, where information is indicated by colour, provide a secondary means to indicate this information, such as 'Check the red box (Box 1)'.

Where possible, and if a platform or programme allows, users should be given the option to change the colours used in content.

Images

Images can be used to help contextualise information and provide an alternative means to present data, for example in charts.

Our content can often unintentionally perpetuate stereotypes. We're focusing on identifying where this occurs and removing discriminatory material.

Assessment materials should contain images sparingly and only when necessary for the question/task.

Learning resources and marketing materials, for example, can include a greater range and frequency of imagery. These should always be diverse and inclusive across all products, in terms of representing people and activities from various nations, cultures and lifestyles.

All images should have alternative text, descriptive captions or labels, where possible. In digital settings, this will allow screen-reading software to be used effectively. Avoid images which contain text as this can complicate the presentation of information; write descriptions in the text body instead.

Images should depict a balanced range of people carrying out different activities to avoid a lack of representation, e.g. a female engineer, an older person as a trainee, etc.

For further support regarding the use of inclusive and diverse images, please view this presentation from the FY21 Black FE Leadership Event.

Digital

Digital content can offer users more accessibility as they can adjust features such as font size, colour and contrast. The standard font for digital content should be Arial for accessibility.

More information on how to make web content more accessible to individuals living with disabilities, can be taken from the **Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)** which all City & Guilds digital content should comply with as much as possible.

Print

Where appropriate, our print content should be made easily available upon request in alternative formats such as large print, subtitles to accompany audio etc. This should be planned, in coordination with user requests, so that accessible formats are available for users at the same time as the standard print format.

Note that centres have some responsibility around their learners being able to access specialised formats such as Braille; this does not fall solely to staff at City & Guilds to organise.

Sex and gender

Key terms

Cisgender or 'cis'
A person whose gender identity corresponds with their birth sex.

Intersex
A term which describes a person born with both male and female sex characteristics.

Non-binary
A person whose gender exists outside of the binary of male and female. This can mean rejecting the idea of gender altogether, as well as experiencing both male and female genders at once.

Transgender or 'trans'
A person whose gender does not correspond with their birth sex.

Sex

Sex refers to biological characteristics, typically referring to male, female or intersex persons.

Content should aim to provide balanced representation of the different sexes and avoid reproducing harmful stereotypes.

Gender

Gender identity refers to an individual's sense of being a man, woman, another gender, or a combination of the two in relation to non-binary and gender non-conforming individuals.

When referring to individual personas or case studies, provide a balance of typically masculine and feminine pronouns (he/him/his and she/her/hers). Where appropriate, also include gender-neutral pronouns 'they', 'them' and 'theirs', e.g. 'Mari has started an apprenticeship and has completed their on-site training recently'.

Avoid gender stereotypes by using inclusive language e.g. 'Dr Smith balances his time well' can become gender-neutral if changed to 'Doctors like Dr Smith balance their time well'.

Gender transition

Gender transition is the process of transitioning from one gender to another.

City & Guilds is committed to supporting people's expression of their gender identity. For our qualifications we currently record gender identity of candidates as M/F for national monitoring purposes. Examples of gender inclusive language include employing the use of gender-neutral pronouns e.g. they, them, where possible.

Pronouns

Pronouns are used in place of nouns, personal pronouns refer to specific individuals.

Some pronouns are gendered in the English language. For example, 'she/her' and 'he/him' pronouns are typically associated with women and men, respectively. Some non-binary people use gender-neutral pronouns like they/them, however there are also non-binary people who go by 'she/her'

or 'he/him'. Other inclusive pronouns include 'xe/xem' (pronounced 'zee' and 'zem') and 'ze/hir' (pronounced 'zee' and 'here').

When working with content that includes reference to different identities and pronouns, ensure that the term 'preferred pronouns' doesn't feature anywhere. The charity Stonewall advises that this suggests a person's identity is a 'preference' or up for debate, which is not inclusive practice.

Here are some links to further reading on personal pronouns:

https://www.mypronouns.org/how
https://www.stonewall.org.uk/about-us/news/international-pronouns-day

Honorifics

These are used as a prefix to a name as a form of address.

Some honorifics denote a person's gender, relationship status or profession. When using honorifics in content, effort must be made to present a diverse range of gender identities and avoid bias. Some common honorifics include:

Mr – typically used for male-identifying individuals (regardless of relationship status).

Ms – typically used for people identifying as women (regardless of relationship status or when relationship status is unknown).

Mrs – used for people identifying as women (traditionally used to describe those that are married).

Mx – a gender neutral title for those who do not wish to specify their gender or who identify as non-binary (regardless of relationship status).

Sexual orientation

Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, someone of another sex, or to a combination of sexes.

A conscious effort to promote representation of all relationships and sexual orientations should be an important consideration in all our content to better promote inclusion. The inclusion of individuals from minority sexual orientations is a good way to improve representation and inclusion.

Don't represent heterosexuality as a default. Avoid language which assumes heterosexual (or 'straight') relationships are the norm, and use inclusive terms where possible. For example, instead of 'mother and father', use 'parents' as this describes a variety of families.

As with many of the protected characteristics described in this guide, it is important to use person-centred language when describing individuals. For example, instead of 'the gays' use 'gay people'.

It is important to note that sexual orientation is **not** the same as gender identity. For example, a transgender person can have the same sexual orientation as a cisgender person, and the gender identity of someone's partner doesn't define their sexual orientation.

Marriage and civil partnership

Marriage is a civil or religious union between a man and a woman or between a same-sex couple. Same-sex marriage is legally recognised in the whole of the UK.

Both heterosexual and same-sex couples can have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples.

Content should provide representation of the different types of relationships. Where relationships may be discussed in content, unmarried couples, individuals in civil partnerships and marriages (including same-sex marriages) should be included. For instance, 'Sam's partner Tom also works as a engineer' could easily represent an unmarried couple or a couple in a civil partnership. Wording relating to marriage should include same-sex couples, as marriage equality has been a gradual process; some documents may need to be updated.

Pregnancy and maternity

Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. This also includes individuals who are acting as surrogates. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating someone unfavourably because they are breastfeeding.

To provide an inclusive representation of pregnancy and maternity, content should reflect the legal protections for people while they are pregnant and in the maternity period afterwards. For example, if content discusses employment, where appropriate, include examples of flexible working, maternity leave and nursing, as detailed by the Equality Act 2010. Including the availability of adoption, parental or paternity pay and leave can also help to better represent different families.

Race, culture and ethnicity

Refers to the protected characteristic of race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins.

When producing content which refers to people and places, try to reflect society's diversity and avoid any potential instances of cultural, racial or ethnic bias. This is to ensure that there is a balanced representation of activities, roles or professions associated with different groups of people to avoid offensive racial stereotypes.

When referring to a group of people, do not use phrases such as 'the Blacks' or 'the Asians'; instead, use 'Black people' (with a capital B) or 'Asian people'. Use 'ethnic minorities' instead of 'bame', 'BAME', 'BME' or 'people of colour'.

Using a diverse range of names in content, where necessary and natural, is one way to reflect the diversity of our audience. It's important to note that some names may not be easily identifiable as names or familiar to some readers (including some Western names). Try to use common names from various cultures, e.g. Jack, Juan, Soo-Yi, Mia, Aisha, etc.

We believe differences should be respected and valued. We aim to have our curriculum reflect this and provide a sense of belonging and identity to all young people across the UK. To do this, we need to bring in diverse world views and multicultural history into our content where possible. Through a positive representation of Black and other ethnic minorities' contribution to British history, we can improve social cohesion and challenge institutional racism. In a multicultural society, all students can benefit from understanding the history and experience of where other people in their communities come from. The aim of this is to widen

the assumptions of 'Britishness' to include the generations of immigrants which have formed the UK's social, economic and political landscape.

Religion or belief

'Religion' refers to any religion, including a lack of religion. 'Belief' refers to any religious or philosophical belief and includes a lack of belief. Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.

When producing content which requires the audience to form a response, try to avoid making references which assume the audience's understanding of a particular religious or cultural practice.

References to specific cultural or religious holidays should be relevant to the context of the content. For example, in the UK, a diverse population will recognise various days such as St George's Day, Eid and Diwali. We need to be mindful that in some sectors such as childcare, knowledge of common cultural or religious holidays is expected.

In some parts of the UK, such as Northern Ireland, issues such as religious sectarianism and discrimination are an important consideration in fostering inclusion. Direct references to communal or religious communities in this context should therefore be avoided. If referring to an area of communal contention, consult local industry colleagues for guidance.

References for best practice in I&D

Legislation:
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Publications:
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McClenaghan H., Boyd G. (2011) *Equality Scheme for CCEA*. Belfast: Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment

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Websites:
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Turner, E. (2021) *Diversity and Ability – Meet the Team – Emma Turner* [online] Available at: https://diversityandability.com/team/emma-turner/ [Accessed October 2020]

Interviews:

Conversation between Shanine Salmon and Emma Turner (Partnerships and Outreach Lead at Disability & Ability) on 15 October 2020

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Who can I contact if I have a query about newly-created or existing content that is outdated, inappropriate or offensive?**

    The first port of call will either be the relevant Industry Manager, Technical Advisor or your line manager. If you or they need further guidance on the topics of equality, diversity and inclusion, you can get in touch with your area's Inclusion and Diversity Champions.
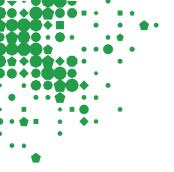
    Find details on who your area's Champions are on the **Inclusion and Diversity site on CityNet**.

2. **What should I do if a customer flags potentially inappropriate content?**

    We advise contacting customers who reach out with a holding response thanking them for flagging the issue and letting them know this will be investigated. If you need any support or guidance on the customer's query/complaint, please get in touch with your area's Inclusion and Diversity Champions.

3. **Can I offer suggestions for the guide?**

    We welcome any suggestions for this guide. If you would like to contribute any ideas, please contact the Inclusion and Diversity Champions.