

**EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY**

**Version 1.0**

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# PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT

Abundance aims to be an organization where people can be free to be themselves no matter what their identity or background. This policy sets out Abundance’s approach to equality and diversity. Abundance believes that everyone should be treated equally, regardless of their religion, beliefs, age, gender, race, disability or sexual orientation. Abundance, in line with its values of “care, share, empower” is committed to promoting equality and diversity. We celebrate diversity and promote a culture that actively values difference and recognises that people from different backgrounds and experiences can bring valuable insights to the workplace and enhance the way we work. We are an inclusive organization which will provide equal opportunities throughout employment including in the recruitment, training and development of employees, and in our work we proactively tackle and eliminate discrimination. By creating a working, learning and social environment in which individuals can utilise their skills and talents to the full without fear of prejudice or harassment, we aim to create a culture where everyone can reach their fullest potential.

# What is Equality?

For the purposes of this policy we define equality as breaking down barriers, eliminating discrimination and ensuring equal opportunities and access for all groups both in employment, and to goods and services.

# What is Diversity?

For the purposes of this policy we define diversity to mean celebrating difference and valuing everyone regardless of their background. Each person is an individual with unique skills and who can contribute to Abundance’s work.

# Policy Statements

# Our commitments

1. Work towards the elimination of unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimization based on a protected characteristic, whether actual, perceptive, or associative.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
3. Foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
4. Subject its policies to continuous assessment in order to examine how they affect protected groups and to identify whether its policies help to achieve equality of opportunity for all these groups, or whether they have an adverse impact.
5. Monitor the recruitment and progress of all students and staff, collecting and collating equalities information and data as required by law or for the furtherance of University equalities objectives.
6. Promote an inclusive culture, good practice in teaching, learning, and assessment, and good management practice, through the development of codes of best practice, policies, and training.
7. Take positive action wherever possible to support this policy and its aims.
8. Publish this policy widely amongst staff and students, together with policy assessments, equality analysis and results of monitoring.

# Our Responsibilities

Abundance’s staff, volunteers, contractors and any personnel connected with our work should feel valued, respected and included. All staff should be informed of this policy. Harassment, exclusion and bullying will not be tolerated on any level. All staff should feel comfortable at work and always be treated with dignity and respect. We will treat all our community members, partners, staff, volunteers, contractors and others with respect, courtesy and consideration at all times.

# Employees’ Responsibilities

All of our employees must adhere to and comply with this Policy and the spirit in which it is written. Employees must treat all colleagues and community members with courtesy, respect and consideration at all times. Any form of discrimination must be reported to senior management immediately.

# Public’s Rights & Responsibilities

All public coming into contact with Abundance can expect to be treated with respect, courtesy and consideration at all times by our staff and we expect you to treat our staff in the same way. They will not be discriminated against, or treated less favourably in any way on the grounds of your religion, beliefs, age, gender, race, disability, or sexual orientation.

# Objectives of the Policy

1. No applicant, employee or member will receive less favourable treatment or be subjected to any form of discrimination.
2. All employees and members will be given the help they need to attain their full potential wherever that is possible.
3. We secure the best employees for our needs by accessing all sections of the community.
4. We achieve an ability based volunteer and workforce that is in line with the working population mix.

# Recruitment

As Abundance is predominantly a volunteer run organization, we rarely recruit staff. Wherever Abundance recruits, if possible all vacancy advertisements will include an appropriate short statement on equal opportunity and diversity, and steps will be taken to ensure that knowledge of vacancies reaches all areas of the community. Candidates will be recruited providing consideration for gender diversity, differently able people and economically challenged applicants. We will also endeavour to ensure that all vacancies are advertised both internally and externally simultaneously.

The selection criteria (job description and employee specification) for all roles will be kept under constant review to ensure that they are essential for the effective performance of the job. Remuneration will be set for the advertised position before applicants are seen and selected.

Wherever possible, more than one person must be involved in the recruitment and selection process. In addition, the reasons for the selection and rejection of applicants for vacancies must be recorded.

# Employee Training and Promotion

Abundance believed that providing equality of opportunity, valuing diversity and promoting a culture of inclusion are vital to our success. Whilst all training and employment opportunities will be offered strictly on merit, we will encourage underrepresented groups to apply for these opportunities within Abundance. Wherever possible, efforts will be made to identify and remove unnecessary or unjustifiable barriers and provide appropriate facilities and conditions of service to meet the special needs of disadvantaged and/or underrepresented groups.

# Feedback and Complaints

Our feedback will be based on our values of “Care, share, empower”. Using empathy and compassion we will deal with any complaints of discrimination quickly and in a constructive manner. We appreciate that this can be a difficult subject to raise and individuals may feel uncomfortable or intimidated. We are committed to ensuring that you feel able to come forward without fear.

# Conclusion

Abundance will comply with all legal obligations in Malawi in a transparent manner. This policy runs through every function of our business. We understand the importance of equality and diversity and will ensure that this policy is being implemented by all concerned. We will monitor all of the feedback that we receive in relation to the issues affected by the Policy and will amend the policy as necessary. The policy will be reviewed annually or earlier as deemed fit by the Board of Directors.