



Irish College of  
Ophthalmologists  
*Eye Doctors of Ireland*  
*Protecting your Vision*

# IRISH COLLEGE OF OPHTHALMOLOGISTS

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Date	Revision	Author	Approved by
01.12.2021	Version 1	Rebecca Martin	ICO Board

## Purpose

The Irish College of Ophthalmologists is committed to the principles of equality of opportunity for trainees.

ICO acknowledges that it has a responsibility to conduct its operations in ways that do not discriminate against people as described under the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015 and Equal Status Acts 2000 - 2015.

The purpose of this document is to

- support the rights of trainees with protected characteristics to participate in a training and work environment that is accessible, inclusive and free from discrimination and harassment; and
- outline the processes involved in seeking reasonable adjustments where appropriate for a trainee or potential trainee who indicates that they have a disability either at time of application for training or during the course of training on one of its postgraduate training programmes.

## Scope

This policy applies to actual or potential less favourable treatment of trainees on one of the nine protected grounds as set out in the Employment Equality Acts 1998 – 2015.

In particular, the meaning of “disability” within this policy is considered in accordance with the definition of disability contained in the Employment Equality Acts 1998 – 2015, and includes physical, intellectual, learning, cognitive or emotional disabilities.

### Policy Overview

This procedure aims, as far as possible, to:

- ensure that trainees are not treated less favourably than other trainees on the basis of their race, age, gender, disability, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion or membership of the travelling community;
- promote recognition and acceptance of diversity within the ICO community; and
- identify and support the Reasonable Adjustment needs of trainees with a disability through effective, open communication with all stakeholders.

## Commitment

ICO is committed to the principles of equality of opportunity for trainees.

ICO acknowledges that it has a responsibility to conduct its operations in ways that do not disadvantage people with protected characteristics as described under the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015 and Equal Status Acts 2000 - 2015. To achieve this commitment, ICO will:

- promote and foster an environment which encourages positive, informed and unprejudiced attitudes towards trainees with protected characteristics;
- ensure that appropriate training opportunities are provided to allow personnel with the responsibility for implementing this policy (management and HR) to do so effectively;
- ensure that appropriate training opportunities are provided to allow personnel with the responsibility for complying with this policy (all ICO employees and trainees) to do so effectively;
- ensure that all trainees have the opportunity to access training opportunities;
- ensure that requests for Reasonable Adjustments for applicants or trainees with disabilities are considered fairly, completed as soon as practicable and are appropriately monitored and reviewed; and
- liaise with local sites to ensure that the needs of trainees with protected characteristics are met in relation to the environment of each training site.

## Confidentiality and Data Protection

Trainees should not assume in all cases that ICO has in its possession the necessary information to ensure that the aims of this policy are fulfilled. It is the responsibility of the trainee to draw such matters to the attention of ICO.

ICO has put in place structures (including policies and procedures) to allow trainees to disclose relevant information to allow the aims of this policy to be fulfilled.

In particular, for ICO to be able to take appropriate measures, a trainee must disclose their actual or potential disability to ICO, together with all relevant surrounding circumstances. To disclose a disability, a trainee should contact the ICO Training Programme Manager.

ICO acknowledges that information provided about a trainee's protected characteristics is personal and private and will respect the confidentiality of all such information in accordance with GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

## Appropriate Measures for Persons with Disabilities

ICO will; wherever it is possible, and necessary and reasonable to do so, make appropriate adjustments to the training environment to enable a trainee with a disability to perform effectively and to the best of their ability.

A Trainee who believes that they may require assistance should in the first instance contact the ICO Training Programme Manager or the local HR department, where appropriate (if already in a training post). A Trainee must provide reasonable notice of the need for adjustment and the necessary documentary evidence to support this request.

An adjustment is reasonable if it successfully balances the interests of all parties affected. Accordingly, ICO will ensure that all parties affected are consulted when implementing appropriate adjustments.

Appropriate measures for trainees are measures implemented by the ICO to ensure that all trainees have equal opportunity to participate in all aspects of the training programme, including the following:

- recruitment processes;
- performance of duties;
- performance management;
- access to professional and career development;
- physical access to building and facilities; and
- access to information

As training takes place at clinical sites, workplace adjustments will be discussed with the HR department of the clinical training placement. Changes may be, where possible, introduced into the workplace that take account of a trainee's disability.

In assessing the assistance required, the Inherent Requirements of the training and the specialty of training will be considered in consultation with the trainee, the Training Body, Human Resources at the relevant site, and, where appropriate, other relevant sources of advice.

Adjustments may include:

- provision of appropriate equipment or assistance to ensure there is no barrier in the selection process;
- changes to work practices;
- training or retraining;
- providing essential information in suitable formats;
- modification to equipment or the support of specialised equipment, furniture or work related aids;
- short term or interim strategies (e.g. car parking permits or office relocation to enable physical access to workplace and support for performance of duties);
- flexible work arrangements; and
- alterations to premises or work areas.

ICO may determine that an adjustment is not appropriate where:

providing the adjustment would impose a disproportionate burden on ICO (taking into account the financial and other costs entailed, the scale and financial resources of ICO and the possibility of obtaining public funding or other assistance);

- even with the provision of the adjustment, the trainee would not be to fulfil the requirements of the training programme;
- making the adjustment would cause harm to others (including patients) and it is reasonably necessary for ICO not to provide the adjustment to prevent such harm;
- the adjustment constitutes a treatment, facility or thing that the person might ordinarily or reasonably provide for himself or herself.

Before determining that an adjustment is not appropriate, ICO must thoroughly consider that alternative adjustments that might be made. ICO will discuss all options with the trainee, the Training Body, Human Resources at the relevant site, and, where appropriate, other relevant sources of advice such as Occupational Health professionals.

If necessary, ICO may arrange for professional advice to assist in assessing the trainee's needs. This advice will specify:

- the nature of the disability or disabilities
- the functional limitations placed on the Trainee by this disability
- whether the disability is likely to improve or worsen in time and may require review
- the training adjustments necessary to assist the trainee in dealing with their disability

The trainee will be advised by ICO of the outcomes of their request for assistance and adjustment.

If the decision regarding reasonable adjustment is not satisfactory to the individual, they can appeal the matter in accordance with the ICO Appeals Policy.

## Review

This Policy shall be subject to review every three years from the date of approval of this document by the ICO Board.

Approved By:	Date
ICO Board	01 <sup>st</sup> December 2021
Review	