



# **Equal Opportunities & Dignity at Work**

## **Unicorn I.T. Solutions Ltd**

46-48 East Smithfield  
London  
E1W 1AW

0845 123 5435

[www.unicornit.co.uk](http://www.unicornit.co.uk)

**March 2009**

## **This document is taken directly from the Unicorn IT Employee Handbook**

### **1.1 Equal Opportunities – Statement**

Unicorn I.T. Solutions Limited ('the Company') is an equal opportunities employer and will apply objective criteria to assess potential suitability for jobs.

It is the Company's policy as an employer to meet or exceed all statutory obligations under the relevant legislation, including the following:

- The Race Relations Act 1976 as amended
- The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 as amended
- The Equal Pay Act 1970 as amended
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as amended

The Company aims to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment on the ground of race, colour, nationality, religion, ethnic or national origins, age, gender, marital status, sexual orientation or disability.

Selection criteria and procedures are reviewed to ensure that individuals are selected, promoted and treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities.

All employees will be given equality of opportunity and, where appropriate and possible, special training to enable them to progress both within and outside the organisation.

The Company is committed to a continuing programme of action to make this policy effective and bring it to the attention of all employees.

As such, this policy will always be set out in at the least the following:

- Instructions to those concerned with recruitment, selection, remuneration, training and promotion
- Documents available to employees, recognized trade unions or other representative groups of employees
- Recruitment advertisements or other literature

This policy on equal opportunities also applies in relation to the provision of goods, facilities or services and shall at all times be available to all our employees, visitors, customers, suppliers and contractors, being set out in at least the following:

- Instructions to managers and staff
- The Employee Handbook
- Literature available to the public

1.1.1 It is the Company's policy to provide equal opportunities in employment irrespective of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, mental or physical disabilities, age, marital or civil partnership status, actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, religion or belief.

1.1.2 This Policy applies to all Employees and to all applicants for employment.

1.1.3 The Company is committed to the promotion of equal opportunities and to ensure that the human resources, talent and skills of all Employees are maximised.

1.1.4 The Company's policy is to treat all Employees with respect and dignity, and to ensure that Employees are not victimised or subjected to harassment or discrimination on the grounds outlined above.

1.1.5 The Company seeks to fulfil this commitment to equal opportunities through the application of Policies and Procedures, which are consistent and equitable, and recognise the expertise and ability of each individual.

1.1.6 All allegations of discrimination will be thoroughly and promptly investigated. Where allegations are substantiated, appropriate disciplinary action up to and including dismissal will be taken against any person responsible.

- 1.1.7 The Company is committed to equal pay in employment. It believes its male and female Employees should receive equal pay for like work, work rated as equivalent or work of equal value. In order to achieve this, the Company will endeavour to maintain a pay system that is transparent, free from bias and based on objective criteria.
- 1.1.8 The Company will make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability.

## **1.2 Recruitment**

- 1.2.1 All applicants for employment and all Employees applying for alternative positions or promotion within the Company shall be assessed according to their skills, experience and ability to do the job.
- 1.2.2 With disabled job applicants, the Company will have regard to its duty to make reasonable adjustments to work provisions, criteria or practices, or to work premises in order to ensure that the disabled person is not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with persons who are not disabled.

## **1.3 Employment Verification**

The Company will provide information to prospective external employers and others regarding an Employee's dates of employment and positions held. The Company will also verify the accuracy of salary information released by the Employee.

## **1.4 Training and Development**

- 1.4.1 Equal consideration will be given to all Employees for training opportunities, both to perform their job and to develop personally.
- 1.4.2 Employees will be appraised against relevant, objective criteria to measure performance and training needs.
- 1.4.3 Promotion prospects will be governed by individual merit, ability, achievement and development potential.
- 1.4.4 The Company will train, develop and promote on the basis of merit and ability only.

## **1.5 Post-employment Discrimination**

The Company will not discriminate against any former Employee on the basis of their race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, mental or physical disabilities, age, marital or civil partnership status, actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, religion or belief; for example, when providing references for future employment, or in conducting the Appeals Procedure for any former Employee.

## **1.6 Monitoring**

- 1.6.1 The Company will, from time to time, review the Equal Opportunities Policy and progress in achieving its objectives.
- 1.6.2 Where barriers to equal opportunities are identified, any necessary changes will be made to this Policy.

## **1.7 Discrimination Grievances**

- 1.7.1 If you believe that you have been subjected to direct or indirect discrimination, you should invoke the Company's Grievance Procedure as set out in this Handbook.
- 1.7.2 In view of the sensitivity of this subject, you may, if preferred, approach a Director rather than your Manager. In either case, the Company will treat the matter as strictly confidential.

## **2. HARASSMENT AND BULLYING (DIGNITY AT WORK) POLICY**

### **2.1 Harassment and Bullying (Dignity at Work) – Statement**

- 2.1.1 It is the Company's policy to maintain a non-discriminatory working environment that is free from harassment or bullying based on race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, mental or physical disabilities, age, marital or civil partnership status, actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, religion or belief.
- 2.1.2 The harassment and bullying of Employees by any person (Management or Colleague) is strictly prohibited. Such behaviour is a violation of employment and discrimination laws, and may also contravene criminal and/or civil law in some circumstances.
- 2.1.3 It is the responsibility of all Employees to eliminate any harassment, bullying or intimidation of which they are aware.
- 2.1.4 All allegations of harassment or bullying will be thoroughly and promptly investigated. Where allegations are substantiated, appropriate disciplinary action up to and including dismissal will be taken against any person responsible.

### **2.2 Harassment and Bullying**

- 2.2.1 Harassment and bullying take many forms ranging from tasteless jokes and abusive remarks to pestering for sexual favours, threatening behaviour and actual physical abuse. Whatever form they take, harassment or bullying are always serious and are totally unacceptable.
- 2.2.2 The Company recognises that harassment and bullying can exist in the workplace as well as outside and that this can seriously affect Employees' working lives by interfering with their job performance or by creating a stressful, intimidating and unpleasant working environment.
- 2.2.3 Harassment and bullying include any unwelcome, unreasonable and/or offensive conduct on the basis of an individual's race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, mental or physical disabilities, age, marital or civil partnership status, actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, religion or belief, which have the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Harassment or bullying may be physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct. Examples include:
  - (a) Unwelcome sexual attention, requests for sexual favours, or physical contact, eg, touching.
  - (b) Lewd, suggestive or over-familiar behaviour.
  - (c) Insults, derogatory comments, ridicule or 'jokes' of a sexual or racist nature.
  - (d) Display or circulation of sexually suggestive or racially sensitive material.
  - (e) Displaying abusive or offensive writing or material.

- (f) Abusive, threatening or insulting words, behaviour, language or mockery, including abusive comments about appearance.
- (g) Unfair allocation of work.
- (h) Deliberate exclusion from workplace conversations.
- (i) Any other conduct based on an individual's race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, mental or physical disabilities, age, marital or civil partnership status, actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, religion or belief, which may be intimidating or abusive to another person.

These examples are not exhaustive and disciplinary action at the appropriate level will be taken against Employees committing any form of harassment, bullying or intimidation.

## 2.3 Complaining About Harassment or Bullying

- 2.3.1 **Informal complaint** - the Company recognises that complaints of harassment and bullying, and particularly of sexual harassment, can sometimes be of a sensitive or intimate nature and that it may not be appropriate for you to raise the issue through the Company's normal Grievance Procedure. In these circumstances, you are encouraged to raise such issues with a senior person of your choice (whether or not that person has a direct supervisory responsibility for you) as a Confidential Assistant. This person **cannot** be a Director, who will be responsible for investigating the matter if it becomes a formal complaint.

If you are the victim of minor harassment, you should make it clear to the harasser on an informal basis that their behaviour is unwelcome and ask the harasser to stop. If you feel unable to do this verbally, then you should hand a written request to the harasser, and your Confidential Assistant can help you in this.

- 2.3.2 **Formal Complaint** - if you believe that you have been subjected to harassment or bullying, you should invoke the Company's Grievance Procedure as set out in this Handbook.

In view of the sensitivity of this subject, you may, if preferred, approach the Managing Director directly rather than your immediate Manager. In either case, the Company will treat the matter as strictly confidential. However, in order to effectively investigate an allegation, the Company must be able to determine the scope of the investigation and the individuals who should be informed of or interviewed about the allegation. For example, your identity and the nature of the allegations must be revealed to the alleged harasser so that he or she is able to fairly respond to the allegations.

If possible, you should keep notes of the harassment so that the written complaint can include:

- (a) The name of the alleged harasser.
- (b) The nature of the alleged harassment.
- (c) The dates and times when the alleged harassment(s) occurred.
- (d) The names of any witnesses.
- (e) Any action already taken by you to stop the alleged harassment.

Upon receipt of a formal complaint, the Company will take action to separate you from the alleged harasser to enable an uninterrupted investigation to take place. This may involve a temporary transfer of the alleged harasser to another work area or suspension with pay until the matter has been resolved.

The person dealing with the complaint will carry out a thorough investigation in accordance with the Company's Disciplinary Procedure. Those involved in the investigation will be expected to act in confidence and any breach of confidence will be a disciplinary matter. Your complaint will also be dealt with in accordance with the Company's Grievance Procedure.

When the investigation has been concluded a draft report of the findings and of the investigator's proposed decision will be sent, in writing, to you and to the alleged harasser.

If you, or the alleged harasser, are dissatisfied with the draft report or with the proposed decision, this should be raised with the investigator within five working days of receiving the draft. Any points of concern will be considered by the investigator before a final report is sent, in writing, to you and to the alleged harasser. If you are still dissatisfied you may appeal in accordance with the Company's Grievance Procedure.

### **2.3.3 General Comments**

If the report concludes that the allegation is well-founded, the harasser will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Company's Disciplinary Procedure. An Employee who receives a formal warning or who is dismissed for harassment may appeal against the disciplinary action by using the Company's Disciplinary Appeal Procedure.

If you bring a complaint of harassment, you will not be victimised for having brought the complaint. However, if the report concludes that the complaint is both untrue and has been brought with malicious intent, disciplinary action will be taken against you.