

# ITALIA CONTI

## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and Equal Opportunities Policy

Version	2526-1.1
Prepared by:	Head of Quality Assurance
Reviewed by:	Policy Steering Group
Approved by:	Policy Steering Group
Approval date:	03 June 2026
Next review:	30 June 2027

The Head of Quality Assurance owns the maintenance and review cycle for this policy. The Principal is accountable for student-facing, academic and higher education operation of the policy, and the Chief Operating Officer is accountable for staff-facing and organisational operation.

Academic or student-experience themes, and data are reported to AQB; operational or staffing matters are reported to SLT; and material legal, regulatory, reputational or governance risks are escalated to the Board of Directors.

This policy is approved by the Policy Steering Group and reviewed annually. It will be updated earlier where required by legal, regulatory, OfS, funding, operational or governance changes, complaint or casework themes, audit findings, material data issues, or lessons learned.

Any material change must be escalated for AQB, SLT or Board approval where required by the Accountability Matrix or Terms of Reference & Meetings Manual.

# ITALIA CONTI

---

1. Overview .....	3
2. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at Italia Conti .....	3
3. Aims .....	4
4. Legislation and guidance .....	5
5. Purpose.....	5
6. Core Principles and Practices .....	6
7. Responsibilities and management .....	7
8. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy and Governance .....	8
9. Implementation and Working Practices .....	9
Policy links: .....	10

## 1. Overview

Italia Conti is committed to providing equality of opportunity for all students, applicants, staff and members of its wider community across all areas of institutional activity. We seek to ensure that individuals are treated fairly, with dignity and respect, and are not subject to unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation or exclusion.

Italia Conti will not tolerate discrimination or harassment on the basis of any protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

This includes working to challenge and prevent ableism, ageism, faith-related discrimination, homophobia, racism, sexism, transphobia and other forms of discrimination or prejudice.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion are central to Italia Conti's values and to the creation of a safe, respectful and inclusive learning and working environment. This policy sets out the institution's expectations, responsibilities and governance arrangements in relation to equality of treatment, inclusive practice and non-discrimination.

Targeted initiatives relating to access, widening participation, student success and progression are set out separately in the Access and Widening Participation Policy and, where applicable, the Access and Participation Plan.

## 2. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at Italia Conti

Italia Conti recognises Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) as fundamental to high-quality performing arts training. We are committed to fostering an environment in which all students and staff can develop their creative potential and thrive, regardless of background.

The principles of equality, diversity and inclusion underpin this approach:

- **Equality** refers to ensuring that all individuals have fair access to opportunities and are not disadvantaged by discrimination or systemic barriers. This includes designing curricula, policies and practices that support equality of opportunity across the Italia Conti community. Recognising that students have different starting points and intersecting circumstances, we explicitly hold **Equity** in mind, ensuring a truly level playing field where every individual can thrive.
- **Diversity** recognises and values the differences within our student body and workforce, including backgrounds, perspectives, identities and experiences. We aim to create an environment in which these differences are respected and positively contribute to learning, teaching and creative practice.
- **Inclusion** focuses on creating a culture of belonging, where all individuals feel respected, supported and able to participate fully. This includes removing barriers to access and ensuring equitable access to opportunities, resources and decision-making processes.

Italia Conti is committed to ensuring that all students and staff are treated with dignity and respect, and to maintaining a learning and working environment free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation. We aim to support all members of our community to achieve their full potential.

To support the implementation and monitoring of EDI policies and practices, Italia Conti maintains Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committees (EDICs), comprising staff, students and alumni. These committees contribute to institutional governance by feeding into quality assurance structures and the Senior Leadership Team, supporting continuous improvement in equality of opportunity.

### 3. Aims

The aims of this policy and Italia Conti's ethos as a whole are to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- promote equality of opportunity across the Italia Conti community;
- support a safe, respectful and inclusive learning and working environment;
- ensure that students, applicants, staff and visitors are treated with dignity and respect;
- embed inclusive and non-discriminatory practice across institutional activity, including teaching, learning, assessment, student support, employment, governance and communication;
- support staff and students to understand their responsibilities in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion;
- comply with Italia Conti's duties under the Equality Act 2010 and any other relevant legal, regulatory or governance requirements.

Italia Conti's approach is underpinned by the following principles:

- **Fair treatment and dignity**  
All members of the Italia Conti community should be treated fairly, respectfully and without unlawful discrimination.
- **Inclusive learning and working environments**  
Teaching, learning, assessment, student support, employment practice and institutional processes should be designed and delivered in ways that support inclusion and equitable participation.
- **Representation and belonging**  
Italia Conti recognises the importance of representation, visibility and belonging within specialist performing arts training and employment.
- **Intersectionality and dialogue**  
The institution recognises that individuals may experience multiple and overlapping forms of disadvantage or discrimination. We encourage respectful discussion and critical engagement with issues of identity, representation, inclusion and equality.
- **Staff responsibility and development**  
Staff are expected to understand their responsibilities in promoting equality, diversity and inclusion and to engage with appropriate training and development.

- **Transparency and accountability**

Italia Conti will maintain clear reporting, complaints and escalation routes, supported by monitoring, governance oversight and continuous improvement.

## 4. Legislation and guidance

This document meets the requirements under the following legislation:

- The Equality Act 2010, which introduced the public sector Equality Duty and protects people from discrimination
- The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011, which require schools to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the public sector Equality Duty and to publish equality objectives
- Relevant Office for Students regulatory requirements, including conditions relating to access and participation, student protection, harassment and sexual misconduct, freedom of speech, consumer protection and transparency, where applicable;

This document is also based on Department for Education (DfE) guidance: The Equality Act 2010 and schools.

For higher education and OfS-regulated activity, this policy should also be read alongside the OfS Regulatory Framework, and Italia Conti's approved governance documents including the Terms of Reference & Meetings Manual and Accountability Matrix.

## 5. Purpose

- The purpose of this policy is to set out Italia Conti's approach to equality, diversity, inclusion and equal opportunities across its learning, teaching, student support, employment, governance and operational activity.
- This policy establishes the principles and expectations that support fair treatment, inclusive practice, non-discrimination and respect across the Italia Conti community.

This policy is intended to:

- ensure that applicants, students, staff and visitors are treated fairly and are not subject to unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation or exclusion;
- establish, encourage and promote the core principles and indicators of equality that inform and support our working practices, our selection procedures, and the pursuit of excellence.
- support inclusive and equitable practice in teaching, learning, assessment, student support, recruitment, employment and institutional decision-making;
- clarify the responsibilities of students, staff, managers and governance bodies in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion;
- provide a framework for monitoring, reporting and responding to equality and inclusion themes;
- support compliance with relevant legal, regulatory and governance requirements.

Targeted activity relating to access, widening participation, student success and progression is addressed separately through the Access and Widening Participation Policy and, where applicable, the Access and Participation Plan.

## 6. Core Principles and Practices

Italia Conti promotes an ethos of equality, fairness, dignity and inclusion across its learning, teaching, employment and community activity. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion inform institutional decision-making, policies, procedures, curriculum development, student support, staff recruitment and day-to-day conduct.

Our central principles, outlined below, are **regardless** of age, race (which encompasses colour, nationality, ethnicity and national origins), disability, family responsibility, pregnancy and maternity, gender, gender identity, marital status, religion or belief, sexual orientation, or socio-economic status.

- **Fair treatment and non-discrimination**

All students, applicants, staff and visitors should be treated fairly, respectfully and without unlawful discrimination. No individual should be disadvantaged, excluded from opportunity, or subject to less favourable treatment on the basis of a protected characteristic.

- **Respectful learning and working environment**

Italia Conti seeks to provide a positive learning and working environment free from discrimination, harassment, victimisation, bullying and abuse. Behaviour or language that is discriminatory, derogatory, intimidating or otherwise inappropriate will be challenged and may be addressed through the relevant disciplinary, complaints, safeguarding, harassment, sexual misconduct or staff procedures.

- **Access to educational provision and institutional opportunities**

Students should have equitable access to educational provision, facilities, support services, training activity and institutional opportunities, subject to reasonable adjustments, legitimate course requirements, safeguarding, health and safety, and welfare considerations.

- **Admissions, assessment and student opportunity**

Applicants and students should be considered fairly and consistently in admissions, auditions, assessment and progression processes. Students are assessed against the same published academic criteria, while reasonable adjustments may be made to assessment methods or arrangements to ensure equitable access. Detailed admissions and audition arrangements are set out in the Admissions and Auditions Policy.

- **Reasonable adjustments and learner support**

Italia Conti will seek to identify and implement reasonable adjustments for disabled students, applicants and staff where required. Further information is set out in the Disability, Additional Learning Support and Reasonable Adjustments Policy and relevant staff policies or procedures.

- **Curriculum, casting and creative practice**

Italia Conti will use teaching, learning, curriculum design, tutorial activity and creative practice to promote respect, inclusion and critical engagement with equality, diversity and representation. Course areas may set out specific casting or creative practice

principles in relevant course handbooks, recognising the need to balance educational aims, professional preparation, student wellbeing, inclusion and artistic integrity.

- **Religion, belief and freedom of expression**  
The religion, belief and lawful expression of students and staff will be respected. The exercise of these rights will be supported in a way that does not unlawfully infringe the rights, safety, dignity or opportunities of others, and should be considered alongside Italia Conti's Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom policies where relevant.
- **Staff recruitment and employment practice**  
Italia Conti seeks to recruit, employ and develop staff through fair, transparent and inclusive procedures. The institution will monitor relevant recruitment and employment data where appropriate and use this to support inclusive employment practice and continuous improvement.
- **Training and development**  
Italia Conti will provide appropriate staff training and development to support equal opportunities, inclusive practice and compliance with this policy. Staff are expected to engage with relevant training and apply inclusive practice within their roles.
- **Monitoring and continuous improvement**  
Italia Conti will review, monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of its equality, diversity and inclusion policies and practices. Themes arising from data, student feedback, staff feedback, complaints, casework, governance review or external requirements may inform future action planning and policy development.

## 7. Responsibilities and management

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is a shared institutional responsibility. All members of the Italia Conti community are expected to act in accordance with this policy and to contribute to a respectful, inclusive and non-discriminatory learning and working environment.

**Students, staff and visitors** are expected to treat others with dignity and respect, comply with this policy, and avoid conduct that may amount to discrimination, harassment, victimisation, bullying or abuse.

**Staff** are expected to apply this policy within their areas of work, including teaching, learning, assessment, student support, recruitment, administration, communications, events and professional practice. Staff should raise concerns, seek advice and follow relevant reporting or escalation routes where equality or inclusion issues arise.

**Managers and senior staff** are responsible for supporting implementation of this policy within their areas of responsibility. This includes promoting inclusive practice, responding appropriately to concerns, ensuring staff understand relevant responsibilities, and escalating material risks or recurring themes through appropriate governance routes.

**The Quality Team**, in conjunction with the Policy Steering Group, is responsible for coordinating the cyclical review and maintenance of this policy, taking account of relevant legal, regulatory, operational, governance and casework developments.

**The Senior Leadership Team, Academic Quality Board and Board of Directors** provide oversight through their respective governance responsibilities. Academic, student-experience and equality-related themes may be reported to Academic Quality Board. Operational, staffing or resource matters may be reported to Senior Leadership Team. Material legal, regulatory, reputational or governance risks must be escalated to the Board of Directors where required by institutional governance arrangements.

Day-to-day responsibility for implementation is devolved through senior leaders, managers, course teams, professional services teams and relevant committees. Formal reporting, escalation and approval routes are set out in Italia Conti's approved governance documents, including the Accountability Matrix and relevant Terms of Reference.

## **8. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy and Governance**

Italia Conti's approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is supported by institutional structures that enable strategic oversight, staff and student engagement, accountability and continuous improvement.

These structures support the identification of equality and inclusion priorities, the monitoring of lived-experience themes, the development of institutional action, and the escalation of relevant risks through appropriate governance routes.

### **Key structures include:**

- **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer**  
Italia Conti has a designated Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer who provides specialist advice, guidance and support to staff and students. The role contributes to the development and implementation of EDI-related policy, action planning, training and inclusive practice across the institution.
- **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee**  
The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee supports institutional accountability and progress against EDI priorities. It provides a forum for staff, students and alumni, where appropriate, to contribute to discussion, identify themes, support action planning and inform institutional improvement.  
  
The Committee may consider themes relating to inclusion, representation, belonging, discrimination, accessibility, student and staff experience, curriculum, language, culture and institutional practice.
- **EDI Steering Group**  
The EDI Steering Group provides senior oversight of EDI activity. It receives relevant themes, recommendations and updates from the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee and supports alignment between EDI priorities and wider institutional planning, governance and resourcing.
- **EDI Action Plan**

Italia Conti maintains an EDI Action Plan to support the delivery, monitoring and review of equality, diversity and inclusion priorities. The Action Plan may be informed by student and staff feedback, data, policy review, casework themes, sector developments, regulatory requirements and governance priorities.

- **Governance alignment and escalation**

EDI themes may be reported through relevant governance routes, including Academic Quality Board, Senior Leadership Team and the Board of Directors, depending on the nature and materiality of the issue. Academic and student-experience themes may be reported to Academic Quality Board; operational, staffing or resource matters may be reported to Senior Leadership Team; and material legal, regulatory, reputational or governance risks may be escalated to the Board of Directors.

- **Relationship with access and participation**

EDI governance may consider themes that intersect with access, participation, continuation, student success and progression. However, targeted access and participation activity, including risks, targets, intervention strategies and evaluation commitments under the Access and Participation Plan, is governed through the Access and Widening Participation Policy and relevant access and participation governance routes.

## 9. Implementation and Working Practices

- Italia Conti expects Equality, Diversity and Inclusion to be reflected in day-to-day practice across teaching, learning, assessment, student support, employment, communications, events, governance and institutional decision-making.
- The institution will support implementation of this policy through appropriate governance oversight, staff training, student engagement, policy review, data monitoring, feedback mechanisms and action planning.
- Italia Conti operates a zero-tolerance approach to unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and discriminatory conduct. Concerns or complaints relating to discrimination, harassment, sexual misconduct, bullying, victimisation or exclusion will be triaged and handled under the relevant student, staff, safeguarding, complaints, disciplinary, harassment and sexual misconduct procedures.
- Where a concern relates to speech, teaching, performance, course materials, artistic practice or academic discussion, the matter will also be considered consistently with Italia Conti's Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom policies.
- Student and staff feedback relating to equality, inclusion, accessibility, discrimination, participation or barriers to success may be thematically analysed and reported through appropriate governance routes. Actions arising from this analysis should be recorded, assigned to appropriate owners and reviewed through relevant committees or management structures.
- Equality and inclusion monitoring data will be collected, stored and used in accordance with the Data Protection Policy and relevant data protection requirements. Where data is used for governance, regulatory, partner, public or statutory reporting, appropriate checks, assumptions and approvals should be retained.

# ITALIA CONTI

---

- Teaching, learning, assessment and student support practices should take account of inclusive practice and reasonable adjustments where appropriate. Monitoring of reasonable adjustments and support needs may be used to inform planning, staff development, policy review and service improvement.
- The principles of this policy should inform the design and review of course materials, websites, communications, marketing literature, recruitment activity, student information and institutional guidance.
- Students on online courses should also refer to the Italia Conti Student Charter for Distance Learning and any course-specific information relevant to their mode of study.

## **Policy links:**

*Access and Widening Participation Policy*

*Admissions and Auditions Policy*

*Data Protection Policy*

*Disability, Additional Learning Support and Reasonable Adjustments Policy*

*Extenuating Circumstances Policy*

*Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plans*

*SEND Policy and Information Report FE*

*Student Charter*

Where a concern or case falls across more than one policy area, Italia Conti will identify the most appropriate procedure for handling the matter, taking account of the nature of the concern, the individuals involved, relevant legal or regulatory requirements, safeguarding considerations, and the need for fair process.

Italia Conti encourages students, staff, applicants and visitors to ask questions, seek guidance and raise concerns where they are unsure about equality, diversity and inclusion matters, or where they need support, adjustments or advice. Early conversation can help the institution understand concerns, identify appropriate support, and resolve issues before they escalate. Individuals may speak to an appropriate member of staff, manager, tutor, student support contact, the EDI Officer at [EDI@italiaconti.co.uk](mailto:EDI@italiaconti.co.uk), or use Italia Conti's Speak Up route at [speakup@italiaconti.co.uk](mailto:speakup@italiaconti.co.uk) where they would prefer to raise a concern or seek guidance through that channel.

**END**