

Vu Online<sup>™</sup>



# Equality & Diversity Policy

**INTERNAL DOCUMENTATION**

Vu Online Ltd.  
Company: 07413911  
VAT: GB100594940

*A mostly environmentally friendly policy document, please print sparingly.*

# Foreword

Vu Online is committed to its mission, vision, and core values.

## Our Mission

Growing sustainable business communities by helping SMEs to pursue economic goals while reducing their environmental impact.

## Our Vision

We believe:

- In supporting SME's to create customer-centric marketing strategies to accelerate their economic growth, thereby creating mutually beneficial experiences and a prosperous and sustainable future.
- In order for business communities to flourish they need to promote responsible growth, equitable career opportunities and societal value, thereby leaving a lasting positive impact on subsequent generations.
- That every business worldwide should be driven by a profound sense of responsibility, promoting a greener, fairer world for future generations through a vastly reduced environmental footprint.

Vu embodies this vision in its own practices.

## Our Values

Vu is a digital marketing agency delivering positive change for organisations. We prioritise good work, people, sustainable business and the environment because we choose to.

We hold the following values close:

- Advice that suits our clients – not us
- Working towards a green web
- Hands-on help
- Education when it's sought
- Belief in potential
- Being Human

# Equality & Diversity Policy

## Introduction

### **Standing against offshore for profit**

According to [business Live](#) The UK is now the fifth-biggest digital exporter in the world.

Over the last four years Britain's digital tech trade surplus increased by 68 per cent - from £8.7billion in 2015 to £12.8billion in 2019. This fast-growing sector is now only behind the insurance industry (£16.9billion) and financial services (£43.4billion).

Vu does not use offshore development resource for reasons outlined in its Ethical and Environmental Policies.

In order to ensure that slavery or poor working conditions are kept out of its supply line, due diligence air miles would have a disproportionate environmental impact set against the economic benefit.

### **The UK Tech industry**

This doesn't make the onshore UK industry the perfect solution, it suffers a lack of representation.

The UK tech industry is worth over £764 billion, across that landscape there continues to be a lack of diversity when it comes to technology roles, especially with regards to gender in leadership positions.

According to [techUK](#), less than a tenth (8.5%) of senior leaders in UK tech are from ethnic minority groups, a sixth (16%) of IT professionals are female, and a tenth (9%) of all IT specialists have a disability.

### **Women in the tech industry**

A [Tech Nation](#) report on UK tech companies has highlighted the current gender imbalance, revealing that only a fifth (19%) of tech workers are women with less than a quarter (22%) of tech directors are female.

### **Ethnicity**

Tech Nation's report found that people from ethnic minority groups make up a larger share of the technology workforce (15.2%) than they do across the wider UK workforce (11.8%). Despite this, less than a tenth of senior tech leaders are from ethnic minority groups.

### **Disability**

While a fifth (19%) of the UK working population as a whole has a disability, techUK reveals that when it comes to IT specialists with a disability, this only amounts to a tenth (9%) of workers.

## Our approach

The aim is for our workforce to be truly representative of all sections of society and our customers, and for each employee to feel respected and able to give their best.

The truth is that Vu Online is not currently contributing to improve the above underrepresentation, and is seeking to address the above imbalances with this policy through its future recruitment.

In line with government guidance from [Positive Action in the workplace](#), Vu will seek to *redress an imbalance for underrepresented groups*.

We are also committed to encouraging equality and diversity among our current workforce, and eliminating unlawful discrimination.

We believe that in supporting business communities to flourish we need to encourage responsible growth, encouraging equitable career opportunities and societal value, thereby leaving a lasting positive impact on subsequent generations.

## Purpose

The organisation - in providing goods and/or services and/or facilities - is also committed against unlawful discrimination of customers or the public.

The policy's purpose is to:

- provide equality, fairness and respect for all in our employment, whether temporary, part-time or full-time
- not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation
- oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities

The organisation commits to:

- encourage equality and diversity in the workplace as they are good practice and make business sense
- develop a recruitment process that promotes diversity
- create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued

# Scope

The rights and obligations set out in this policy apply equally to all employees, whether part time or full time on a substantive or fixed-term contract, and also to associated persons such as secondees, agency staff, contractors and others employed under a contract of service.

These individuals hold personal responsibility for the application of this policy. New team members are expected to read and familiarise themselves with this policy, and ensure that it is properly observed and fully complied with.

This policy is also of particular relevance to directors, line managers and other employees concerned with recruitment, training and promotion procedures and employment decisions which affect others.

# Training and development

This commitment includes training managers and all other employees about their rights and responsibilities under the equality policy.

Responsibilities include staff conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.

All team members are required to take an Equality, Diversity & Inclusion course which covers the following:

- Have an understanding of The Equality Act and the Protected Characteristics
- Understand the types of discrimination, including direct, indirect, harassment and victimisation
- Know what allyship and positive action are, and how to implement them
- Know how to treat others with respect and offer everyone fair access to opportunities
- Understand the benefits of diversity and inclusion for the business
- Have gained a number of simple tools that can be used to create positive change

# Complaints

All staff should understand they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, customers, suppliers and the public take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities

Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and any appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice

Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence

- make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation
- decisions concerning staff being based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act)
- review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law
- monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality and diversity, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equality policy

## Recruitment

In line with government guidance from [Positive Action in the workplace](#), Vu will seek to *redress an imbalance for underrepresented groups*.

Vu Online is committed to the following practices.

### Sourcing

- Ensure language used is as inclusive as possible to appeal to candidates from different backgrounds.
- Source candidates from a variety of different places when seeking out new candidates.
- Create a culture founded on positive social values that appeals to candidates who value equality and diversity
- Modernise our company policies to suit the needs of a diverse workforce, ie floating holidays for religious or cultural observances.

### Screening

- Where possible eliminate bias by using AI tools to review applications by filtering for specific role requirements.
- Where possible eliminate bias by using “blacking out” techniques for example, removing names, schools, date of birth, specific locations, and so on can all contribute to some degree in a biased assessment of the candidate, even if it’s not done consciously.

### Hiring

- Seed our shortlists with a proportionate number of diverse candidates, resulting in a more even playing field when it comes to the final decision.
- Be aware of unconscious bias in our decision making. It is human nature to be biased – we naturally associate with or hire people who look, sound and have the same values as us.

- Operate to a standardised interview process where all candidates are asked the same questions and scored to rank their skills, experience and attributes against the position's requirements.

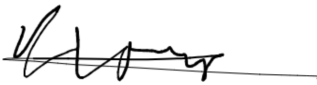
## Monitoring & Development

Monitoring will also include assessing how the equality policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues.

The equality policy is fully supported by senior management and has been agreed with trade unions and/or employee representatives.

Use of the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures does not affect an employee's right to make a claim to an employment tribunal within three months of the alleged discrimination.

This policy will be reviewed annually or when there is a change in circumstances, in work practices or the introduction of new legislation.



Dominic Cooper  
*Director, Vu Online Ltd.*

Date: 16/5/2023  
Review date: 16/5/2024