MINUTES

IFATE EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE

Meeting title:	IfATE Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee
Meeting date:	5 April 2023
Protective marking:	Official

Board members present:	Robin Millar (RM) (the Chair); Dayle Bayliss (DB); John Cope (JC); Jessica Leigh Jones (JLJ)
IfATE officials present:	Rachel Cooper, Strategy Director (RCo); Avril Cooper, HR Director (AC); Carmen Watton, Head of Priority Projects (CW); Phil Scullion, Head of Communications and External Affairs (PS); Clare Linsell, HR Team (CL); Luke Melia, EDI Project Team (LM); Jackie Stott, EDI Project Team (JS); Jody Walker, Research and Analysis Team (JW); Richard Crowther, Governance Team (RCr)
Other stakeholders present:	**Paul Russell**, DfE (PR); Mark McClennon, Chief Information Officer, Burberry (MM); Two speakers from Edge Foundation (item 5 only)
Apologies:	Beth Chaudhary, Strategy Director

Item 1. Welcome and introductions

1. The Chair welcomed members and officials to the meeting.

2. The Chair outlined the objectives for the meeting; these were to:
   i. Receive an update on the EDI Strategy and toolkit launch, and ongoing promotion plans
   ii. Hear from the Edge Foundation, an independent foundation working to inspire the education system to give all young people across the UK the knowledge, skills, and behaviours they need to flourish in their future life and work.
   iii. Hear from IfATE's HR Director on the action plan that will seek to fulfil the aims and actions of the employer strand of the EDI Strategy.
   iv. Consider and provide direction on the EDIC forward look and revised terms of reference.

Item 2. Minutes and actions from the last meeting

3. The draft minutes of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDIC) meeting of 07 February 2023 were approved without amendment.

Item 3. Matters arising from update papers on core EDI objectives

4. LM introduced the item which provided an update on EDI objectives 1 and 2: IfATE as a decision maker and IfATE as an authority in the sector. With regard to objective 1, members noted the recent launch of the EDI Strategy and toolkit by IfATE Chief Executive Jennifer

Coupland at her recent speech to the Annual Apprenticeships Conference on 14 March 2023. Members welcomed the positive feedback received from several organisations.

5. The launch of the EDI Strategy and toolkit had been utilised as an opportunity to showcase IfATE as an authority within the sector, with an internal and external communications plan underway to promote and embed the strategy and use of the toolkit. Further work was planned in the Spring.

6. No questions were raised in relation to objectives 1 and 2. Members noted that EDI objective 3, IfATE as an employer, would be covered under a separate item.

Item 4. Update on launch of EDI Strategy and Toolkit

7. LM introduced the item and explained that since its launch, the EDI Strategy had been available on the IfATE website and that IfATE was keen to promote its use. Members emphasised the importance of ensuring that the EDI Strategy was in an easily-accessible location on the website, and that engaging content should be created for the IfATE website that showcases IfATE as an employer and highlights its commitment to diversity and inclusion.

8. PS set out the actions taken by IfATE in promoting the EDI Strategy. External promotional work had included a letter to a national newspaper on 'returnships', and internal promotion to IfATE staff. Members asked how endorsements of the EDI Strategy could be found. Members were advised that, where possible, endorsements were publicised through existing communications channels. In addition key messaging had been incorporated into staff briefings and that it was hoped that the EDI Strategy would be disseminated through the extended networks belonging to IfATE's contacts.

9. Members emphasised the importance of monitoring the impact of the products and policies with which the EDI Committee had been involved, and requested that a tracker was devised.

Item 5. External speakers

10. The Chair welcomed two speakers to the meeting from the Edge Foundation (EF), and expressed the committee's appreciation for the Foundation's support in the development of the EDI Strategy and toolkit.

11. EF outlined that the organisation's purpose was to provide young people with the knowledge, skills and behaviours to enable them to flourish in life and work. The Foundation had established working relationships with devolved administrations and with international organisations such as the Council of Europe.

12. EF noted the committee's interest in utilising data and research in developing its work, and explained that EF was connected to a number of research networks and would be happy to share insights where possible. EF were keen to ensure that learner progress was tracked over the longer term, beyond their immediate outcome or transition.

13. Members emphasised the importance of high quality data and the benefits of sharing data and research where possible, noting the importance of ensuring that individuals could retrain or upskill into new and emerging sectors in an agile way, and the variability of opportunities due to geography and across different sectors of the economy. EF indicated that they would be happy to invite IfATE officials to some of their future study visits and that where possible they could share information on how other nations address the challenges presented by regionality.

14. Members noted the importance of encouraging people back into work where possible, and that collaboration with cross-departmental and international networks could lead to ideas and solutions that may not otherwise have been developed alone.

15. The Chair thanked EF for their time and for sharing their insights.

Item 6.   Employer Action Plan

16. AC introduced the item and explained that IfATE had grown beyond the threshold for the mandatory reporting of its Gender Pay Gap (GPG), after having voluntarily reported on this for some time. AC added IfATE's GPG was smaller than in some organisations and was broadly in line with comparator organisations.

17. Members asked if there were any measures that could be taken to improve the GPG, and were informed that as a Civil Service organisation there was a structured grade system with a clearly-defined way of allocating jobs to grades and grades to pay and that this was to an extent determined centrally. In this regard it could be demonstrated that the same work attracted the same rates of remuneration.

18. Certain potential sources of pay disparity existed however. These included very limited circumstances where recruitment and retention supplements could be paid for specialist skills that were otherwise difficult to recruit, and where an employee made a level transfer into IfATE from another Civil Service employer, where the existing rate of pay was typically honoured. Measures that could be taken to address the GPG included those that would support colleagues from under-represented groups to progress into more senior, and thus more highly paid, roles.

19. Members welcomed the high declaration rates of protected characteristics amongst IfATE staff, and asked what could be done to raise the social mobility declaration rate. A member offered to meet with the IfATE HR team to discuss ways in which the rate could be increased.

20. AC added that IfATE would refresh its approach to bullying, harassment and discrimination (BHD), noting that the effects of BHD had the potential to impact disproportionately on staff with a disability. Proposals included the use of independent facilitators to organise confidential discussions to better understand the issues. IfATE's approach to BHD would be embedded into its values, and workshops held on standards of behaviour.

21. Members noted the importance of the Employer Action Plan and expressed their confidence in its successful implementation by the HR team. The governance team was asked to work with the HR team to ensure the robustness of the processes for staff to raise concerns, and that where necessary, issues and concerns could be brought to the attention of the committee.

Item 7.   EDIC forward look and Terms of Reference

22. RCr introduced the item and explained that revisions had been proposed to the committee's Terms of Reference following feedback at the last committee meeting. Members welcomed the proposed changes and agreed that the proposals should go to the IfATE board for approval.

Item 8. Any Other Business

23. CW informed the committee about the potential for assessment costs to increase due to the assessment of knowledge, skills and behaviours specific to EDI. CW and RCo added that advice had been received from DfE on best practice in communications regarding citation and communication of research. This had led to the establishment of new links with a team in DfE who may have valuable advice and contributions in future.

24. The Chair thanked members and officials for their attendance. The date of the next meeting is 05 July 2023.

Author: Secretariat, Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education
Date created: 14 April 2023
Version: Final