

# **WITTEN LLP DIVERSITY POLICY**

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## **1. STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLE**

Witten LLP is committed to creating and maintaining a workplace environment where diversity is encouraged and in which every member of the firm can realize his or her potential for excellence.

This policy is intended to guarantee equal opportunities for all firm members including students, legal and non-legal staff, associates, and partners.

Discrimination on the grounds of race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, gender identity, gender expression physical disability, mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, sexual orientation, source of income or family status (“Protected Grounds”) is prohibited by the *Alberta Human Rights Act* and the *Alberta Professional Code of Conduct*, and is expressly prohibited at Witten LLP in any work-related activity, or in any of the firm’s employment or recruitment practices.

Witten LLP acknowledges that barriers to equality are often systemic; that discriminatory practices and attitudes are often entrenched as custom within workplaces, and are not recognized as harmful; and that sometimes, employees must be treated differently in order to achieve substantive equality.

Witten LLP has undertaken a critical examination of its policies and practices, and will take positive measures to ensure that employment terms, conditions and opportunities with the firm are implemented in accordance with equality principles for all employees and prospective employees.

## **2. RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORITY**

The ultimate responsibility and authority for applying this policy rests with the Management Committee of Witten LLP.

### **3. RIGHT TO EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AT WORK**

1. Applicants for employment and employees have a legal right to equal opportunities at Witten LLP.
2. Witten LLP prohibits any treatment which has a discriminatory effect on anyone in respect of Protected Grounds.
3. The firm is committed to the identification and elimination of barriers to employment, or to success in employment, that adversely affect any member of the firm or candidate for employment with the firm, based on Protected Grounds.
4. The firm retains the ability to have special programs that aim to enhance employment opportunities at the firm for those who are in groups that have faced restrictions in the past.

### **4. EMPLOYMENT DECISIONS COVERED BY THIS POLICY**

All employment decisions made by Witten LLP are covered by this policy. These decisions include but are not limited to:

- Job Advertising
- Recruitment
- Hiring
- Evaluation
- Firm Committees
- Remuneration
- Benefits
- Availability of Support Services
- Availability of Leave
- Professional Development Opportunities
- Assignment of Work
- Client Entertainment Opportunities
- Advancement
- Offers of Partnership

Any decision made in any of these areas must be made on the basis of performance-based criteria such as qualifications, experience, and merit.

## **5. WORKPLACE GUIDELINES**

### **5.1 Recruitment**

1. All Witten LLP promotional materials will attempt to encourage diversity among applicants to the firm. Where applicable, they will state that Witten LLP is an equal opportunity employer that welcomes applicants from diverse backgrounds.
2. Attempts will be made to circulate firm materials among historically disadvantaged groups within law schools and to encourage a diversity of applicants to apply at Witten LLP.
3. Where students are invited to participate in activities outside of the interview itself, the firm will inform all students of these activities at the earliest opportunity, in recognition of the fact that some candidates will have family, work, religious, and other responsibilities to arrange for in order to attend.
4. Recruiting events will not be held at facilities which engage in discriminatory admission practices and the firm will ensure that no extraneous costs need be incurred for attending such a function.

### **5.2 Interviewing candidates for employment or articles**

1. During the initial interview, interviewers will solicit information pertaining to qualifications, experience, and merit and avoid questions that may lead to preferences or biases on the basis of Protected Grounds.
2. Human rights legislation prohibits denying employment opportunities on the Protected Grounds therefore questions that even indirectly solicit such personal information are to be avoided by those interviewing for the firm. Instead, open ended questions that allow an applicant to offer what, if any, personal information that person feels appropriate should be asked.
3. The applicant should be given an opportunity to explain, with reference to the written job description, why she or he is qualified for the job.
4. When questions relating to personal commitment or future plans are necessary at an interview, all applicants should be asked identical questions. These questions should be open-ended so that candidates can choose whether or not to discuss their personal backgrounds.

### **5.3 Commitment to Diversity**

Witten LLP is committed to taking steps to promote diversity in the profession and at the firm.

#### **5.4 Hiring and Promotion**

1. Persons making hiring decisions for the firm may be asked to attend an orientation session to give them the opportunity to become familiar with this policy and to discuss its implementation.
2. Decisions regarding hiring, job evaluations, remuneration, professional development and admission to partnership will be carried out by committees representing as much of the diversity within the firm as possible.
3. When assessing candidates for job openings and promotion, interviewers will apply objective criteria which relate to the job description and essential skills necessary to perform the job in question.
4. The firm will encourage diversity in the composition of management and other committees of the firm.

#### **5.5 Firm Policies**

A variety of policies are in place at Witten LLP which are intended to assist in achieving the ultimate goal of an equal and diverse workplace free of discriminatory practices.

#### **5.7 Client Entertainment and Firm Functions**

Client entertainment opportunities and firm functions will provide a range of activities that are appealing and suitable for a wide cross section of the firm members.

#### **6. Monitoring the Policy**

1. This policy will be reviewed and evaluated on an annual basis.
2. As part of the annual review, the composition of the firm's legal and non-legal complement will be assessed.