

Inclusion & Diversity

Oaklin Viewpoint



Oaklin Viewpoint: Inclusion & Diversity

Origins & Meaning

**Welcomed Valued
Informed Involved
Supported**

We believe that diversity should be celebrated. At Oaklin, we understand the challenges of being a minority in the workplace and we ensure that differences are welcomed, accommodated, and not hidden away. This document highlights how we are achieving this and our aspirations moving forward.

Inclusion is one of our four core values. We believe that everyone is welcome at Oaklin and can take pride in how they contribute to its success. We value inclusion and equality as much as we do different perspectives and ideas. We harness the range of views and backgrounds found within Oaklin for the good of our work, our clients and most importantly, each other.

What We Do

We are aware that businesses often profess to embrace diversity but fail to act in a manner that brings about a meaningful difference. At Oaklin we strive to bring our viewpoint on Inclusion & Diversity to life through our culture and importantly, our actions.

Diversity of Thought

Everyone at Oaklin has a unique and interesting range of experiences and backgrounds. People join us to do great work and one of the ways we achieve this is through the diversity of thought that we employ as a firm, gained from the diversity of experiences among our employees. Inclusion & Diversity is as important to us as it is to our clients and we know that by ensuring we have an inclusive and diverse workplace, we are doing the right thing by our employees and by our clients.

Our Equal Opportunities Policy

Oaklin has a set of well-developed policies and procedures which we use to provide clarity and accountability. These policies are freely accessible, actionable and regularly refreshed.

We are committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all our people and job applicants. We have created a working environment in which all individuals can make best use of their skills, free from discrimination or harassment, and in which all decisions are based on merit.

We do not discriminate against staff on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation¹.

The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way which we treat visitors, clients, customers, suppliers and former staff members.

All of our people have a duty to act in accordance with this policy and treat colleagues with dignity at all times, and not to discriminate against or harass other members of staff, regardless of their status.

Our Structure

Our flat structure enables us to work as a team without hierarchal boundaries. All ideas are welcome and encouraged. If anyone has an idea for a business growth initiative, they are free to work on it, no matter what their role is in the firm.

“Oaklin is my first full time place of work. As I entered an environment where my colleagues are predominantly far more experienced than me, it would have been easy for more senior members to create a hierarchical structure where junior team members are seen but not heard. Oaklin’s meritocratic culture, however, meant that I was treated with respect from day one. I feel just as comfortable talking to a member of the Leadership Team as I do to one of my fellow graduate Analysts.”

Christian Hill, Business Support Analyst

¹ Protected characteristics defined by the 2010 Equality Act

At Oaklin, we run various initiatives to ensure that everyone is included and feels part of the team, and to ensure we are celebrating diversity rather than hiding it.

One to One Meet-Ups

Our 'Donut' scheme encourages our people to get to know each other, share experiences and to stay connected to everyone in the company, whilst we grow. The Donut app randomly pairs us with another person from the company every month (employees and partners all included) and reminds us to have a coffee and a donut with that person. It's a great initiative that helps us to have friendly, in-depth conversations with people we may not work closely with and helps to keep the firm together as a team.

Little Things

We offer a Little Things allowance of £150 per year to go towards learning a new skill and the results have been incredible! From golfing to sewing to drill making and video editing, this initiative encourages everyone to develop their unique skill-sets with pride. Rather than promoting a mono-culture we encourage everyone to be themselves and articulate their personality.

Monthly Events

Our monthly socials are organised by different people each time and are a fun way to make sure everyone gets to do something that they enjoy with their colleagues. We have had people organise a darts championship, a vegetarian banquet dinner, pasta-making, a 'neon life-drawing' class, a ping-pong night and a seminar on mindfulness and meditation. These socials help us to embrace our different personalities, bring out our different interests, and allow us to share them with each other in an inclusive environment.

Book Club

Our Book Club book is chosen by a different person each month, allowing us to include everyone's interests and read books that we may not have otherwise thought to read, gaining new knowledge and perspectives. Topics of these books have ranged from psychology (Thinking Fast and Slow) through to structural racism (Why I'm no Longer Talking to White People about Race) and have provided the basis for some very interesting and thought-provoking discussions.

Unconscious Bias and Equality in Business Training

We train all our interviewers and those involved in recruitment on Unconscious Bias and Equality in Business. These courses cover the law, attitudes and behaviours that get in the way of a fair and diverse workplace and explain what unconscious bias is and why we all have it. The course helps people to see and understand their own bias; how unconscious bias not only causes injustice but leads to poor and irrational decisions; and proven techniques to help make better decisions.

Our Inclusion & Diversity Working Group

Oaklin's Inclusion & Diversity working group enables us to achieve our goals and gives an Inclusion & Diversity perspective on all aspects of the business. The group is currently working on six different workstreams ranging from reviewing our benefits to communications and event planning. Our team meet once a week, attend activities and research events regularly, take their work very seriously and are passionate about making Oaklin an inclusive and diverse place to work.

"I have never worked anywhere where you can take part in such a diverse range of activities together, where everyone is so genuinely interested in each other's thoughts and experiences."

Claudia Dilley, People Manager

Commitments & Aspirations

Our commitment to I&D should never rest, so we strive to retain the achievements we have made and continue the good work we do. We will always seek more diverse perspectives and know that for a strategy to be effective it must have an awareness of its blind spots. With this in mind, we pledge to do more.

Over the next year we aim to:

- **Review our flexible working and parental leave offerings.**
- **Review our benefit and reward offerings.**
- **Increase our recruitment sources of candidates** to ensure a wide range of people apply to work at Oaklin. **Conduct candidate research** to understand if we're doing anything that might prevent or discourage people from applying to work at Oaklin and make changes based on what we find.
- **Recruit a talent acquisition expert** who'll help us attract a more representative group of people and reduce the opportunities for bias and discrimination in the hiring process.
- **Offer equality and unconscious bias training** to all staff involved in recruitment and provide refresher sessions for existing members of staff too.
- **Maintain and increase our high level of engagement in our social events** by researching what people like best about them and how we can encourage people to attend by offering a more inclusive range of activities and venues.

To speak to any of our Inclusion & Diversity team, please get in touch:
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