



Student Equity and Diversity Policy and Procedure

Purpose

1. This Policy outlines the Australian International Institute of Higher Education's ('the Institute') framework for student equity and diversity including the development, implementation, and regular review of strategies for creating equivalent opportunities for academic success regardless of students' backgrounds.

Scope

2. This Policy applies to:
 - a) all students
 - b) all staff of the Institute whether full-time, part-time, casual or contract
 - c) members of the Institute's governing bodies
 - d) individuals engaged in providing services to the Institute or receiving services from the Institute, such as students, contractors or consultants.

Definitions

3. For the purposes of this Policy:
 - a) **Diversity** is the variety of backgrounds, cultures, ages, abilities, religions, or characteristics.
 - b) **Equity** is the provision of similar opportunities to participate in education.
 - c) **Discrimination** is treating or proposing to treat a person less favourably than, in circumstances that are the same or are not materially different, the discriminator treats or would treat another person because of a personal characteristic protected by the law, such as sex, age, race or disability.
 - d) **Victimisation** is subjecting or threatening to subject someone to a detriment because they have asserted their rights under equal opportunity law, made a complaint, helped someone else make a complaint, or refused to do something because it would be discrimination, harassment or victimisation.
 - e) **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander** is a person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community in which he or she lives.

Policy

Statement

4. The Institute aims to develop and maintain a culture of respect for diversity within the organisation and put in place processes that ensure equivalent opportunities for all students, with a particular focus on historically disadvantaged or underrepresented student populations, other groups protected in equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation, and those



covered by the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program. Specific consideration and support are given to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

5. The Institute adopts a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination based on legislated characteristics. This Policy aligns with the *Student Disability Policy and Procedure*. It is consistent with, and should be read in conjunction with, the *Staff Code of Conduct*, the *Student Code of Conduct* and relevant legislation.

Principles

6. This Policy is based on the following principles:
 - a) to prevent discrimination across all areas of the Institute's operations, including those of its related entities
 - b) to ensure that management is aware of its responsibilities with regard to the implementation of processes for creating and maintaining equal opportunities for all students
 - c) to ensure staff members and students are aware of the Institute's expectation that they will not discriminate, harass or victimise any person
 - d) to encourage students and staff to report instances of discrimination, harassment or victimisation
 - e) to enable students to participate, progress, and complete on the same basis as other, non-disadvantaged, students
 - f) to encourage students to disclose to the Institute if they identify as a members of groups protected by equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation.

Procedure

Strategies

7. The Institute endeavours to provide a discrimination-free environment for all students throughout their experience with the Institute. Key strategies for the creation and maintenance of equal opportunities are outlined below.

Discrimination, harassment and victimisation prevention

8. **Culture:** The Institute ensures a culture of respect for equity and diversity through a process of awareness, training, benchmarking, and monitoring.
9. **Leadership:** Senior staff will demonstrate a high level of commitment to equity and diversity in the Institute.
10. **Understanding of diversity:** The Institute takes active steps to understand the characteristics and mix of both prospective and enrolled students.
11. **Understanding of barriers:** The Institute maintains an understanding of common barriers to access and participation in education, including differences in culture, language, or lack of support.
12. **Staff awareness:** All staff of the Institute will have a general awareness of the obligations of the Institute with regard to anti-discrimination laws. Staff induction includes a component on equity and diversity and the Institute's relevant reporting and complaints mechanisms. In particular,



staff members will be made aware of the need to be sensitive to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and cultures.

13. **Student awareness:** Students receive regular communications, including an awareness session at orientation, on equity and diversity and their rights and responsibilities in maintaining an environment free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
14. **Third-party compliance:** Where services are provided on behalf of the Institute by third parties, the Institute will take all reasonable precautions to ensure that services are delivered in compliance with anti-discrimination laws and will respond promptly and effectively to any report of non-compliance.

Admission

15. **Information:** Information on admission processes and entry requirements is easily accessible and available in a range of formats and supports informed decision-making about studying at the Institute. All policies and procedures are easily accessible prior to applying for admission.
16. **Proficiency assessment:** For each prospective student, academic preparation, proficiency in English, and any impediment to participation and progress are assessed during the admission process. Adjustments to admission criteria will be considered for applicants identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
17. **Needs assessment:** The particular needs and preparedness of commencing students are individually assessed during the admission process.

Participation

18. **Transition:** Commencing students receive transition support, including education sessions on expectations with regard to academic integrity and progress.
19. **Facilities and resources:** Facilities and resources are easily accessible and available. In particular, access to learning resources will not present unexpected barriers, costs or technology requirements.
20. **Special consideration:** special consideration will be given, and reasonable adjustments made, if fair and practicable, to remove any impediments to participation.
21. **Learning support:** Learning support is tailored to the particular mix of students and consistent with the requirements of the course.

Course design

22. **Curriculum:** The curriculum, teaching and study materials, and equipment requirements for the course are selected and reviewed to confirm that they do not present unnecessary barriers to any students including for those with diverse backgrounds.
23. **Delivery modes and activities:** The delivery modes and learning activities of the course take account of intended learning outcomes and the learning capacities and needs of all students.
24. **Assessment:** Assessment procedures and methodologies for the course are designed to enable students from all backgrounds to demonstrate the knowledge, skills or competencies being assessed.

Support services

25. **Training:** Staff members are aware of the services available for the particular mix of students and are trained to assist students from a variety of backgrounds to access the services as and when needed.



26. **Service provision:** Support services, including health and wellbeing services, are adequate considering the particular mix of students and their needs.

Reporting incidents

27. The Institute is committed to ensuring persons who feel they have been discriminated against and/or report an instance of discrimination are not victimised. The Institute will also ensure that all parties to a complaint are:
- a) provided with appropriate guidance and support
 - b) treated fairly, impartially and within the principles of natural justice
 - c) informed of their rights and obligations
 - d) kept informed during any investigation
 - e) given the opportunity to respond to any allegations that may be made against them; and
 - f) informed of the result of any investigation.
28. Reporting incidents plays a crucial role in preventing further discrimination or victimisation. Students and staff reporting incidents of discrimination or victimisation are helping to promote a culture of respect for diversity within the Institute. Accordingly, all students and staff are encouraged to report instances of discrimination or victimisation.

Process

29. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is the designated Equity Contact Officer for the Institute and has ultimate responsibility for the management of complaints made under this Policy.
30. Any student who experiences discrimination, bullying or harassment (except sexual harassment – see *Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault Prevention Policy and Procedure*) or vilification should initially discuss their concerns with the perpetrator if appropriate and safe to do so, or discuss their concerns with Student Services staff.
31. Student Services staff will provide support for any student who has been a victim of behaviour considered a breach of this Policy. Where necessary students will be referred to specialist support or advocacy services.
32. Students may also choose to lodge a complaint at any time following the steps outlined in the *Student Grievance Policy and Procedure*.
33. Confirmed breaches of this Policy will be addressed under the provisions of the *Student Misconduct Policy and Procedure* or the *Staff Code of Conduct* depending on whether the alleged perpetrator is a student or staff member respectively.
34. Where a staff member witnesses alleged discrimination or victimisation of a student, they should first encourage the student to seek support and lodge a complaint as outlined above. Where appropriate the staff member may make a report to the CEO who may take action under the *Student Misconduct Policy and Procedure* or the *Staff Code of Conduct*.

Monitoring and improvement

35. The Institute collects data on the participation, progress, and completion of identified student groups. Student feedback is sought on their experience of diversity and equity at the Institute, including access to support services.



36. The Institute uses the collected data to monitor trends in admission, participation, retention, and completion rates.
37. The Institute will improve its anti-discrimination and equal opportunity strategies based on the collected data, in particular in relation to the access and effectiveness of support services.
38. The Institute will benchmark its performance against relevant sector data and will establish targets as appropriate.
39. The Governing Council receives an annual report on the adequacy and effectiveness of its strategies considering the particular mix of student subgroups and will make adjustments to its strategies as required.

Appeals

40. A student may appeal against a decision made under this Policy and Procedure according to the provisions in the *Student Appeals Policy and Procedure*.

Responsibilities

41. All students are responsible for:
 - a) ensuring that their behaviour and conduct always reflect the standards of the Institute's *Student Code of Conduct*
 - b) engaging with the Institute's diversity and equity initiatives, including attending orientation sessions and providing feedback on their experiences related to equity and diversity.
 - c) not taking unfavourable action against a person who has reported alleged discrimination
 - d) reporting instances of discrimination or victimisation promptly.
42. All staff are responsible for:
 - a) complying with anti-discrimination and equal opportunity laws at all times in the course of their duties, including the obligation not to discriminate, harass or victimise any person
 - b) ensuring that their behaviour and conduct always reflect the standards of the Institute's *Staff Code of Conduct*
 - c) participating in ongoing professional development to stay informed about anti-discrimination laws, cultural competency, and strategies for supporting diverse student populations.
 - d) identifying and addressing potential barriers to participation for students, offering support and making reasonable adjustments where necessary to ensure equitable access to education.
 - e) not taking unfavourable action against a person who has reported alleged discrimination
 - f) reporting instances of discrimination or victimisation to the CEO promptly or supporting students who wish to make a complaint.
43. Student Administration Officers are responsible for:
 - a) implementing the strategies for Support Services
 - b) reporting to the CEO on the implementation of strategies, and any observable trends, at the end of each teaching session.
44. Course Coordinators are responsible for:
 - a) implementing the strategies for Participation and Course Design
 - b) adjusting teaching methods and course delivery to accommodate the varying needs of students, including providing alternative formats and additional support where necessary.



- c) reporting to the CEO on the implementation of strategies, and any observable trends, at the end of each teaching session.
45. The Student Services Manager is responsible for:
- a) collecting, de-identifying as appropriate, and reporting data on the characteristics and mix of prospective and commencing students
 - b) implementing the strategies for Admission
 - c) reporting to the CEO on the implementation of strategies, including any non-compliance, complaints or disputes, at the end of each teaching session.
46. The CEO is responsible for:
- a) leading the Institute's commitment to equity and diversity by establishing clear expectations, ensuring strategic alignment, and providing resources necessary to foster an inclusive environment.
 - b) managing complaints under this Policy that are reported directly to them
 - c) implementing the strategies for Discrimination, Harassment and Victimisation Prevention in this Procedure
 - d) reporting on the implementation of all strategies for equity and diversity to the Governing Council on a yearly basis.
47. The Teaching and Learning Committee is responsible for providing strategic direction on the integration of equity and diversity principles into the curriculum and academic policies, ensuring alignment with the Institute's broader goals.
48. The Governing Council is responsible for:
- a) reviewing the CEO's annual report on the adequacy and effectiveness of equity and diversity strategies.
 - b) utilising this review to assess the Institute's performance and make any necessary adjustments to strategies.



Associated information

Approving body	Governing Council
Date approved	23 October 2020
Date of effect	Commencement of operation
Scheduled review	Two years from when policy commences
Current version approval date	30/08/2024
Next review date	30/08/2026
Policy owner	Chief Executive Officer
Policy contact	Chief Executive Officer
Related AIIHE Documents	Admissions Policy and Procedure Student Disability Policy and Procedure Quality Assurance Framework Risk Management Plan Staff Code of Conduct Student Code of Conduct
Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (Cth)	Standard 1.1, ss 1 Standard 1.3 Standard 2.2, ss 1, 3 Standard 2.3, ss 3 Standard 3.3, ss 3-4 Standard 7.2, ss 2
Other related external instruments/documents	Related Legislation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 (Cth)• Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (Cth)• National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (Cth)• Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)• Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)• Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)• Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cth)• Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)• Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 (Cth)• Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth) Good Practice Documents <p>TEQSA Guidance Note: Diversity and Equity, Version 1.2</p>

Document history

Version	Author	Changes	Approval Date
1.0	Not applicable	Original version	23 October 2020
1.1	Compliance Officer	Reviewed to align with the HESF 2021, responsibilities were strengthened and clarified, and the footer was updated with current addresses.	30 August 2024

N.B. The document is uncontrolled when printed! The current version of this document is maintained on the AIIHE website at www.aiihe.edu.au.