

Learner Access, Equity and Equality Policy and Procedure

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1. Purpose and Scope

This policy outlines AIE's principles and procedures of accessible, equitable and equal education.

The scope of this policy is all trainers, executive staff, Administration staff, and Marketing staff.

2. The Policy

AIE is committed to providing and maintaining an inclusive learning environment for all AIE learners. AIE recognises that each person has different circumstances and backgrounds, and that these characteristics may affect access to education and achieving assessment outcomes. Such individuals may be from disadvantaged groups that have historically been under-represented in vocational education and training (VET). In light of this, AIE learners must be treated equally and equitably, free from [bias](#), [discrimination](#), [harassment](#), [bullying](#) and [vilification](#). Therefore, AIE ensures that:

- a. All marketing material, including the AIE website, is easily accessible, useable and understandable to prospective learners and their families, and that all procedures relevant to course enquiries and applications are easy to find, available to all, and are understandable
- b. All enrolments are conducted in an accessible, ethical and fair manner in accordance with equal opportunity legislation and [language, literacy and numeracy \(LLN\)](#) tests are conducted to identify areas in which AIE can help learners succeed
- c. All training and assessment resources are available to all learners and are easily accessible and understandable, and that there are procedures in place to allow for [reasonable adjustment](#) to assist learners where required
- d. A complaints and appeals process exists and is easy to find and understand, that all learners are informed of the process and that this process is adhered to with the utmost respect and fairness
- e. Support services are available for learners experiencing distress or difficulties and that Administration staff can provide the contact details for such services
- f. A learner withdrawal interview is conducted to determine any access, equity and/or equality issues and how to address them
- g. A system of regular access, equity and equality surveys exists and that the results of such surveys are used for continuous improvement of AIE's service delivery
- h. Staff receive an introduction to VET access, equity and equality at induction and undertake regular, ongoing training while working at AIE.

3. Implementation

The CEO is responsible for the approval of this policy after it has been drafted or reviewed by the Academic Management Committee.

The policy is to be implemented via induction and training of staff and distribution via the AIE intranet and other publications as required.

4. Procedure/s

4.1. Marketing Material

The Marketing Department should ensure that all marketing material, whether in print or digital, is accessible to all users. For digital material, consider visually-impaired users employing screen-reading software. Following [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\)](#) ensures all users of digital and web-based marketing material is appropriate for everyone.

Information on the AIE website should be easy to find and the navigation organised appropriately. Written material should be in plain English and headings should draw users to the right information. Again, following WCAG will ensure website material is accessible.

Interactive marketing material, such as forms, videos and web-based flipbooks, should be designed with the end user in mind. Such content needs to be intuitive and responsive to users' needs. For example, forms should not be overly complex and form copy should be easily understandable; videos should have an option to reduce resolution for users with low bandwidth.

Where there are genuine access limitations regarding training materials or delivery methods (such as minimum PC requirements or download speeds), marketing material must clearly note this on all pre-enrolment information. This helps prospective learners make an informed choice.

4.2. Application and Enrolment

AIE must apply principles of accessibility, equity and equality during its application and enrolment processes.

When working through the application and enrolment process, consider how best to assist prospective learners from the following groups who are historically under-represented in the VET sector:

- a. People with a disability
- b. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- c. Women
- d. People from a non-English speaking background
- e. People in rural or remote areas
- f. The long-term unemployed.

Refer to *Application and Enrolment Policy and Procedure* for guidance.

4.2.1. Language, Literacy and Numeracy

Courses offered at AIE are quite technical, so learners need the required knowledge and skills to be able to achieve course outcomes. Sitting a language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) test highlights where the learner needs improvement and where AIE can help them in their studies.

4.3. Inclusivity

AIE must encourage inclusive learning. While everyone has a right to learn and everyone *can* learn, many people do not have fair access to learning opportunities. Some people need more support than others.

AIE can support inclusive learning through understanding that:

- a. **Everyone learns differently** – Trainers should partner with learners to empower them to achieve their potential, to feel connected, supported and valued as individuals and as part of the AIE community
- b. **Being inclusive is everyone’s responsibility** – Trainers should use a variety of methods, encourage respectful interaction, seek feedback from learners, collaborate with specialists when they need extra help, and continually update their skills
- c. **Learners bring existing knowledge and skills** – Trainers should ensure learning activities have contextual application and relevance, and that the training is productive, meaningful, engaging, and builds on the learner’s existing capabilities.

4.3.1. Key Inclusive Learning Actions

Area	Actions
Understand differences in learner cohorts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AIE ensures it understands the vocational aspirations and support needs of Students prior to enrolment to ensure they are enrolled in the right level course and have the right mix of supports available to help them succeed. • This includes the use of pre-enrolment reviews and guidance to Students. • All AIE trainers have access to information on Student diversity.
Access skills and expertise in addressing difference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductory inclusive learning skills in embedded in AIE RTO personnel induction programs and ongoing professional development on inclusive learning is supported.
Listen to the learner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AIE ensures it is collecting the perspectives of Students, considering Student views in the way courses are organised and support is provided.
Help learners choose an appropriate learning pathway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AIE provides Students with flexible options, advice and guidance on the best pathway towards their vocational outcome, and allows a diverse range of Students to access the training. • All Students are provided with information and guidance on course requirements and outcomes prior to enrolment.
Develop the core skills of learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All AIE trainers have the basic knowledge they need to identify and respond to language, literacy and numeracy needs. • All trainers are encouraged and supported to complete the TAELLN411 Address adult language, literacy and numeracy skills unit of competency.

4.4. Training and Assessment Resources

Training and assessment resources need to be easily accessible, easy to understand, and easy to use.

If learners cannot access resources, they cannot learn. Resources should be stored where learners can easily locate them.

For resources produced by AIE, they should be written in clear, simple English so the largest number of learners can comprehend the instructions without assistance. Similarly, the design and layout should enhance the readability – training and assessment resources are more than simply a delivery of information.

Resources requiring interactivity should be intuitive. Alternatively, if a resource is difficult to use (due to its technical nature, for example), then simple instructions should be provided so learners can make the most use of the resource. If a learner is having difficulty using a resource, the trainer should provide support and guidance tailored to the individual learner. In some cases, reasonable adjustments may be necessary to ensure the learner is able to achieve assessment outcomes.

4.5. Reasonable Adjustment

Special learning requirements may arise from matters relating to a learner's physical, mental, socioeconomic, geographic or other situation. Please refer to *Assessment Policy and Procedure*.

4.6. Support Services and Other Information

Learners are encouraged to use external professional support services if they are experiencing distress or difficulties that are beyond AIE's capability to help. Administration staff can direct learners to these services.

See Appendix D for support services and their contact information.

Other information, such as announcements and emergency plans, should be readily available for learners to see at their convenience. They should also be written in plain English so learners can understand the message and its importance, if relevant.

4.7. Withdrawal Interviews

As part of the learner withdrawal process, the Deputy Head of School (DHOS) meets with the learner to determine the reasons or circumstances of withdrawal. Part of this meeting is to identify any access, equity and/or equality issues, particularly around language, literacy and numeracy (LLN). The DHOS can encourage the learner to reconsider their decision to withdraw, promising to assist the learner with their LLN needs. If the learner agrees, the consultation into reasonable adjustment can begin.

4.8. Complaints and Appeals Regarding Access, Equity and Equality

If a learner has a complaint regarding access, equity and/or equality at AIE, they should follow the complaints and appeals procedures outlined in the *Learner Handbook*. The framework for these procedures are found in:

- d. *Domestic Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure*
- e. *International Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure*.

4.9. Surveys and Continuous Improvement

4.9.1. Surveys

Each learner cohort must be surveyed regarding their access, equity and equality experiences at AIE. These surveys follow the procedures outlined in *Surveys and Evaluations Policy and Procedure*.

See [Effective Equality Surveys](#) (Schneider & Walmsley 2011) for guidance on developing questions and survey structures.¹

4.9.2. Continuous Improvement

4.9.2.1. Marketing Materials

Marketing staff should regularly check:

- a. If print and digital material meets accessibility guidelines
- b. If interactive media and forms are simple and easy to use by people of all circumstances
- c. If language is inclusive.

4.9.2.2. Learning Resources

AIE must continually improve its operations to maintain its place in the industry and preserve its good reputation for being an accessible, equitable and equal VET provider.

Survey data should be analysed by the Academic Management Committee, which will make recommendations for improvement. These improvements should be rolled out before a new cohort of learners begins training.

Even without survey data, staff should always look for ways in which learning resources can be improved. Examples include:

- a. Can the resources use more simple language?
- b. Can the resources be presented better (layout, formatting, and so on)?
- c. Are the resources easy to find?
- d. Is the resource better provided in a different format (PowerPoint, video, PDF, and so on)?
- e. Are the instructions easy to follow or the examples easy to understand?

4.9.2.3. Staff

New staff must be introduced to the particulars of access, equity and equality as applied to the VET sector when they are inducted at AIE. This training should be tailored to the staff member's role.

Professional development regarding access, equity and equality will be regular and ongoing.

¹ Schneider, R & Walmsley, A 2011, *Effective equality surveys: exploring the staff and student experience in higher education institutions*, Equality Challenge Unit and Schneider-Ross, London, England.

5. Definitions

The following definitions apply to this policy:

Term	Definition
Access	In the context of education, access involves ensuring there are enough suitable education options available for prospective learners. This could be facilitated physically (such as campus availability) or virtually (such as online opportunities, which are good for remote workers).
Bias	A prejudice in favour of or against a thing, person, group or institution compared with another. There are two types of biases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conscious bias – also known as explicit bias, whereby an individual is aware of their bias and supports it through their speech and actions • Unconscious bias – also known as implicit bias, whereby an individual is unaware of their bias and believes that their speech and actions are fair to all.
Bullying	Use of force, abuse, hurtful teasing, threats directed at an individual or group in repeated or single cases. Usually types of harassment can be categorised as bullying when of a repetitive nature.
Demographic	A group of people from a category or sector such as age, sex, gender, occupation, income, etc.
Discrimination	Being unjust or treating a person (or persons) differently, especially on the grounds of their personal characteristics, including, but not limited to: age; gender expression; religious, educational, cultural or ethnic background; disability; sexuality; socioeconomic background; linguistic background; marital status; and/or geographical location.
Equal Opportunity	The right for every person to be treated without discrimination, especially on the grounds of race, age, sex, disability, etc.; treating everyone as an individual according to their needs, so that everyone can reach their full potential.
Equality	In the context of education, equality refers to learners being given the same learning opportunities and support measures. Two learners, regardless of their circumstances and/or background, are able to study the same course, access the same learning resources, and achieve the same outcomes.
Equity	In the context of education, equity refers to the individualised support given to learners to achieve assessment outcomes and study goals. Two learners may require different levels of support based on their circumstances or background. They receive this support in the form of reasonable adjustments to learning so they can achieve the same outcome.
Harassment	A wide range of behaviours of an offensive nature which can include sexual, verbal and non-verbal workplace and physical harassment. Usually it demeans, humiliates or embarrasses a person in a disturbing, unsettling or threatening way.
Language, Literacy and Numeracy (LLN)	LLN refers to key communication skills that underpin both broader workplace skills and vocational learning skills. These skills include speaking, listening, reading, writing and using numbers.
Reasonable Adjustment	Reasonable adjustment refers to measures or actions taken to enable learners with a disability to participate in the same educational and training opportunities as learners without a disability.
Vilification	A public act that could incite hatred, serious contempt or ridicule towards a person (or persons) of a specific group or who has a particular characteristic.

6. Related Documents

The following internal documents are related to this policy:

- a. Application and Enrolment Policy and Procedure
- b. Assessment Validation Checklist
- c. Complaints and Appeals Checklist
- d. Complaints and Appeals Form (AIE website)
- e. Domestic Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure
- f. Employee Conduct Policy and Procedure
- g. International Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure
- h. Learner Handbook
- i. Learner Privacy Policy and Procedure
- j. Learner Support Form
- k. Learner Withdrawal Policy and Procedure
- l. Learning Management Policy and Procedure
- m. Online Course Delivery and Service Standards Policy and Procedure
- n. Surveys and Evaluations Policy and Procedure
- o. Trainer Handbook.

The following legislation and standards are related to this policy:

Jurisdiction	Legislation and Standards
Commonwealth	<i>Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)</i> <i>Copyright Act 1968 (Cth)</i> <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)</i> <i>Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2019 (ESOS Act) (Cth)</i> <i>Higher Education Support Act 2003 (Cth)</i> <i>Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986 (Cth)</i> <i>Indigenous Education (Targeted Assistance) Act 2000 (Cth)</i> <i>National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (The National Code)</i> <i>National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 (NVR Act) (Cth)</i> <i>Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2003 (Cth)</i> <i>Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (RDA) (Cth)</i> <i>Racial Hatred Act 1995 (Cth)</i> <i>Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)</i> <i>Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015</i>
Australian Capital Territory	<i>Discrimination Act 1991 (ACT)</i> <i>Disability Services Act 1991 (ACT)</i> <i>Human Rights Act 2004 (ACT)</i>
New South Wales	<i>Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)</i> <i>Disability Inclusion Act 2014 (NSW)</i>
Northern Territory	<i>Anti-Discrimination Act 1992 (NT)</i> <i>Anti-Discrimination Regulations 1994 (NT)</i> <i>Disability Services Act 2012 (NT)</i>

Jurisdiction	Legislation and Standards
Queensland	<i>Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)</i> <i>Disability Services Act 2006 (Qld)</i>
South Australia	<i>Disability Services Act 1993 (SA)</i> <i>Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (SA)</i> <i>Racial Vilification Act 1996 (SA)</i>
Tasmania	<i>Anti-Discrimination Act 1998 (Tas)</i> <i>Disability Services Act 2011 (Tas)</i> <i>Sex Discrimination Act 1994 (Tas)</i>
Victoria	<i>Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibition Bill 2020 (Vic)</i> <i>Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)</i> <i>Disability Services Act 2006 (Vic)</i> <i>Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)</i> <i>Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 (Vic)</i>
Western Australia	<i>Criminal Code Act Compilation Act 1913 (WA)</i> <i>Disability Services Act 1993 (WA)</i> <i>Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (WA)</i>

7. Review

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years by the Academic Management Committee, or at any time in response to legislative changes.

8. Revision History

This policy has undergone the following revisions:

Version No.	Version Description	Contributor(s)	Approval Authority	Date Revised/ Approved
1.0	Approved by Board and document published.		BOD	17 January 2017
1.1	Major update to reflect legislative changes.	Rebecca Donaldson (National Compliance Administration Support)	-	11 May 2021
2.0	Added policies and procedures and legislation relating to reasonable adjustment to 'Related Documents' section; expanded definitions; added introductory statement at 4 Procedure/s and referred to <i>Trainer Handbook</i> .	Ann-Maree Davies (Head of School, Adelaide) Nick Markesinis (Intranet Content Coordinator)	BOD	4 August 2021
3.0	Retitled to <i>Learner Access, Equity and Equality Policy and Procedure</i> , differentiating between the equitable and equal access to education at AIE. Greatly expanded to fully incorporate procedures for managing access, equity and equality.	Nick Markesinis (Intranet Content Coordinator)	BOD	28 January 2022
3.1	Removed reasonable adjustment procedures and replaced with reference to new <i>Assessment Policy and Procedure</i> . Removed original Appendix A defining access, equity and equality because it was a duplication of Section 5. Removed original Appendix C because reasonable adjustment information now found in the new <i>Assessment Policy and Procedure</i> . Formatting update.	Nick Markesinis (Intranet Content Coordinator)	AMC	11 May 2023

Appendix A: Learner's Rights and AIE's Responsibilities

Learner's Right	AIE's Responsibilities
<p>Enrolment Right to seek admission and enrol on the same basis as prospective Students without disability including the right to reasonable adjustments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take reasonable steps to ensure that the enrolment process is accessible. Consider Students with disability in the same way as Students without disability when deciding to offer a place. Consult with the prospective Students or their associates about the effect of the disability on their ability to seek enrolment; and any reasonable adjustments necessary.
<p>Participation Right to access courses and programs; use services and facilities; and have reasonable adjustments, to ensure Students with disability are able to participate in education and training on the same basis as Students without disability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take reasonable steps to ensure participation. Consult with the Student or their associate about the effect of the disability on their ability to participate. Make a reasonable adjustment if necessary. Repeating this process over time as necessary.
<p>Curriculum Development, Accreditation and Delivery Right to participate in courses and relevant supplementary programs that are designed to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding, on the same basis as Students without disability and to have reasonable adjustments to ensure they are able to participate in education and training.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enable Students with disability to participate in learning experiences (including assessment and certification). Consult with the Student or their associate. Take into consideration whether the disability affects the Student's ability to participate in the learning experiences.
<p>Student Support Services Right to access Student support services provided by education institutions, on the same basis as Students without disability. Students with disability have the right to specialised services needed to participate in the educational activities they are enrolled in.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that Students with disability are able to use general support services. Ensure that Students have access to specialised support services. Facilitate the provision of specialised support services.
<p>Harassment and Victimisation Right to education and training in an environment that is free from discrimination caused by harassment and victimisation on the basis of their disability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement strategies to prevent harassment or victimisation. Take reasonable steps to ensure that personnel and Students are informed about their obligation not to harass or victimise Students with disability. Take appropriate action if harassment or victimisation occurs. Ensure complaint mechanisms are available to Students.

Appendix B: Support Services

External support services are available and accessible for all learners studying at AIE. Administration staff will provide learners with the contact details for the following services for matters that require relevant professional assistance.

Referral Service Available	Contact Details
<p>Lifeline Lifeline provides individuals experiencing a personal crisis with access to online, phone and face-to-face support and suicide prevention services.</p>	<p>Phone: 13 11 14 https://www.lifeline.org.au/</p>
<p>Kids Helpline Kids Helpline offers free 24 hour, 7 day telephone counselling support (including anonymous support) to 5–25 years olds who feel depressed, worried, sad, angry or confused about their studies, relationships, and other aspects of life.</p>	<p>Phone: 1800 551 800 https://kidshelpline.com.au/</p>
<p>Drug Info DrugInfo is a service provided by the Australian Drug Foundation that offers information about alcohol and other drugs and prevention of related harms.</p>	<p>Phone: 1300 85 85 84 https://adf.org.au/resources/druginfo/</p>
<p>Reading and Writing Hotline The Reading and Writing Hotline provide advice and referrals to one of 1200 providers of courses in adult literacy and numeracy.</p>	<p>Phone: 1300 655 506 https://www.readingwritinghotline.edu.au/</p>
<p>Centrelink Centrelink delivers social security payments and services to approved individuals.</p>	<p>Phone: 1800 057 111 https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/centrelink</p>
<p>Australian Apprenticeship Support Network (AASN) Australian Apprenticeship Support Network providers handle all matters related to traineeships and apprenticeships.</p>	<p>Phone: 13 38 73 https://www.apprenticeshipsupport.com.au/Home</p>